

Leilani Rosario Matsumoto Texeira (Main Character)

Physical:

5'5" in. tall

125 lb.

Lean runner's build. Small breasts. Olive skin that picks up a tan fast and cinnamon freckles. Scars on inside of arms from cutting. Short plain clean finger and toenails, pinkish brown. Small strong hands.

Style: athletic clothes, jeans and tank tops. Sleeps in tank and boxers. Has Tahitian pearl earrings from Aunty Rosario.

Uses mascara, lipgloss and hair gel for beauty routine. Hair is brown and curly, often frizzy and out of control. She is not vain but utilitarian in her self care.

Her face is heart shaped with large oval tilted eyes, warm goldeny brown, with small lids (half Japanese heritage). Brows are straight slashes that emphasize tilted eyes. Mouth is large and full, wide. Dimple in left cheek. Small but distinct nose with wide nostrils. Mouth is a little too big for her to be beautiful. Teeth are straight and white. Chin pointed. Profile of face is fairly flat from the side, undercut chin. **She is ½ Japanese, ¼ Portuguese and ¼ Hawaiian.**

Family: Lei is only daughter of Wayne Ikaika Texeira and Maylene Matsumoto Texeira, deceased October 23 1994 of a heroin overdose when Lei was nine. Maylene was estranged from her Japanese parents at the time of her death; they live on Oahu and never tried to contact Lei, never knew about her. Names: Yumi and Soga Matsumoto. Will find her in coming books.

Aunt is Rosario Malia Texeira. Grandparents on father's side deceased. Wayne and Rosario are half Portuguese (Justus Texeira, Waimea paniolo, is their father, Maria Ailani Kealoha is mother). Lei is distantly related to Cassie Kealoha, victim in Blood Orchids. There are a lot of unknown relatives on Big Island on both sides; Wayne's lifestyle cut both Lei's parents off from extended family.

Wayne is incarcerated for drug dealing with 20 year stretch increased by killing Terry Chang, crime lord, in prison. Rosario raised Lei in "hanai" tradition of informal adoption after Maylene's death.

Personality: Lei is intense, focused, driven in her job and approach to life. She's impulsive, impatient, a physical risk taker whose abuse made her hardened/desensitized to physical pain. She is serious herself, but appreciates and "gets" humor in other people. She is loyal, hardworking, and a loner who relates better to men than women. She tries to project a hard exterior to hide her fears—of intimacy, home invasion, and her own mental health issues. She's ambitious in her job and passionate about justice for victims. She's often anxious and wound up and handles this by running, pacing and breathing. Sometimes, drinking.

Quirks and attitudes: She carries 'security' objects and uses them to calm and ground herself. She surrounds herself with positive messages, reminding herself to think positive. She does relaxation breathing to manage her anxiety and emotions and pinches herself or otherwise inflicts some self pain as a cue to say in the present moment when she dissociates or has a bad memory. She learned these techniques with a therapist she went to in high school on her last round of counseling before Dr. Wilson.

She locks her house and keeps an alarm system going, using some OCD-like rituals to create a sense of safety. She keeps her gun in its holster behind the bed hanging from the headboard. Bed: her girly refuge, expensive, fluffy.

(By the end of book 6, most of these PTSD symptoms are gone, and she has recovered through therapy and her relationship with Stevens)

Food: she is an indifferent cook and her favorite food is Hot Pockets.

She loves natural beauty and raises orchids as a hobby. She learned orchid growing from Aunty Momi, Rosario's partner in the restaurant.

Her dog: She talks to Keiki, her police-trained Rottweiler, as if the dog were her roommate or sometimes, married partner. She loves the dog and Keiki is both security and relationship to her. Keiki is a major character who saves Lei and Stevens lives several times during the books.

Her Job: She's been a police officer in Hilo for three years. She applied to Hilo PD from California and got into academy, moving over from Marin. She wants to be a detective and is enrolled in a Bachelor's program at UH in Criminal Justice. She graduated from College of Marin in Novato, Indian Valley Campus, with an AA in Administration of Justice. She and Pono have been partners since she graduated from academy. She goes on to make detective, then move to FBI for two years, eventually going back to Maui Police Department where she is a Detective Sergeant.

Her love life: She's never had a long-term relationship until Michael Stevens. She's had sex with three different guys, all dating relationships where she felt she "should" sleep with them but wasn't interested in it and never achieved sexual satisfaction. She dropped the guys after sleeping with them once. She has wondered if she's gay, not because she likes women or is interested in them but because she's closed off to men. She becomes defensive and wary if men ask her out, worried they will see through her front to how damaged she is. Stevens overcomes these barriers through proximity, and being known to her in a friendly role as well as repeatedly demonstrating good character that has her best interest at heart. She fights a physical attraction to him from the beginning that is stifled by her issues, and eventually flowers after Lei's defeat of the killer. They eventually marry and he is a big part of her recovery from early trauma.

Psychological issues: Lei has PTSD of a type that results from sustained abuse in formative years combined with sexual abuse. She has dissociation "episodes" where she goes blank and can't remember what happened during the time of the episode, usually only a few minutes in duration.

During these she appears to be in a trance. She also has moments of dislocation in extreme stress where she appears to observe her body from a distance. She can't remember most of her abuse.

Lei engages in rituals of checking and locking, excessive security measures on her house. She manages herself through exercise (running and lifting weights) breathing, thought stopping, and using affirmations (postits) She has denial about the seriousness of her symptoms, lying to herself and others about them, and fear of really confronting her mental health issues. She's afraid she'll be overwhelmed, lose it entirely if she lets herself feel her feelings or have her memories.

These "time bombs" lead to her inevitable breakdown in the book where she has her memories and a 'dark night of the soul' experience. She regresses to cutting herself and breaks up with Stevens, but the shootout in Volcano Park actually frees her as she has a revelation that she's faced the worst and survived it. Defeating the bad guy in Volcano Park affirms her desire to live and overcome her inner and outer enemies.

By the 6th book of the series, she is virtually symptom-free from PTSD, but she can still be "triggered" by cases or memories that take her back.

Michael Rockford Stevens (Lei's love interest, secondary MC in Books 7, 8 and 9)

Physical:

He's 32 years old when series begins, born Mar 4 1978.

6'3" in. Lean muscular build. Bright blue eyes, deep set. Black brows. Dark brown hair, usually rumpled or uncombed. Rectangular face, chin a little too long. High cheekbones. Not quite handsome, more rugged. Long arms and legs. Michael Phelps-type build.

Modest chest hair. Relates to his body as a tool, utilitarian, not vain. Goes to the gym three times/week. Used to play basketball and box; learning to surf for some years and improving. Has large, long fingered, sensitive hands and a graceful way of moving. Moves fast without seeming in a hurry. Decisive and a leader, can come off as high handed and arrogant. Occasionally funny; Lei's seriousness brings out a playful side.

Skills: Good at his job. Good with firearms, good with people and communication. He's handy and can fix cars and build things. Likes to cook.

Education/career: Enrolled in the military (Marines) after high school. Did a 4 year stint in Iraq from age 18-22; began with LAPD upon discharge. By end of book 8, has rank of Lieutenant, has been commanding officer of a small station, and trains other detectives.

He has a BA in Criminal Justice which he earned on the job as a regular police officer in LA. He is well above average IQ.

Family: Parents lived in LA. Mother Ellen Rockford Stevens, a serious alcoholic, lives in condo and bars. Father, Edward, a firefighter, died in the line of duty when Stevens was 16 and his brother Jared, 14. Stevens has had a few girlfriends and makes a very bad mistake in the books by marrying a Thai sex slavery victim (Anchara Mookjai, book 3, Black Jasmine) after he and Lei break up, to keep Anchara from being deported. This eventually results in his son, Kiet, whom he and Lei raise after Anchara is murdered in book 7, Dark Lava.

Psychology/personality: Stevens is hardworking, persistent, conscientious, intelligent, kind. He is honorable and would never take advantage of the weakness of anyone under his care. He's got his own code of honor and loyalty, with higher standards than most.

Occasionally funny; Lei's seriousness brings out a playful side. He was well liked and connected in LA but his mother's alcoholism was dragging him down and he applied to move to Hawaii to get away from rescuing her, having concluded he was going to find her body in a gutter one day. She was also embarrassing him in the Department and he felt vulnerable and humiliated by bailing her out of the drunk tank and her constant calls.

He has a tremendous attraction to Lei, wanting to protect and rescue her, attracted to her self destructive tendencies as they dovetail with his caretaking tendencies. He senses her sexual damage and wants to heal her.

This all is related to his mother's alcoholism and the death of a female friend due to domestic violence (precipitating event that sent him to Police Academy). He has the Prince in 'Sleeping Beauty' complex; and when she breaks up with him he realizes he has to move slow and keep himself in check, and that she's never going to let him take care of her the way he wants to. He grows through this in learning to respect her choices and judgment and begins to love her for herself as the books go on.

Attitudes and quirks: Loves coffee. Writes hard in block print, signs with a smiley face. Drinks beer from the bottle, tips chair back on two legs when relaxing. Enjoys talking to people, likes people and sees everyone he meets as a possible contact that may be important/useful, enjoys mentoring and teaching younger officers. He likes dogs and other animals. Physically affectionate with Lei, likes to hug and be close with his woman.

Pono Kimo Kaihale (Lei's longtime partner)

Physical:

Age 29 (at the time books begin)

Weight: 220

Height: 6'2"

Build: stocky, muscular.

Pono is ¾ Hawaiian, ¼ Filipino. He has tribal tattoos, one a band of triangles around bicep and wrist, the other a representation of his family in petroglyph characters. On his back is the Hawaiian Island chain. His skin is dark but he has the equivalent of a “farmer’s tan” at neck and shoulderline from his uniform. Also has a tan line from his Oakleys. Keeps his hair, which would be coarse and wavy, buzz cut.

Pono has a large square head with small close-set fleshy ears. His Oakleys dig into the pads of his high cheekbones. He has a girly-looking mouth, and grows a mustache to hide it.

Style: Wears mirrored Oakleys, which have actually left dents in his square head and a tan line around his eyes. He wears nylon workout shorts and t-shirts or net football jerseys when off duty. He loves his uniform and tries to keep it super neat and tidy. He wears a gold cross his Filipino grandma gave him.

Attitudes and Quirks: He’s an ex-smoker and rubs his lips when he’s missing a cigarette. Several family members of his large extended family have fallen into addiction so he feels passionately about keeping kids busy through sports. He played football for UH and coaches for the Menehune League where a nephew plays. He has a “laid back” attitude and doesn’t believe in making waves.

He’s squeamish about dead bodies and gets emotional about little girls since his daughter’s birth. He blames his Filipino roots for things like being sentimental, loving bright colors like his purple lifted truck, and wearing grandma’s cross. He is loyal to a fault, kind and generous, and has a slow fuse- but once roused, he doesn’t forget. He’s never afraid of a physical confrontation, but tries to talk and strategize instead, a contrast to Lei’s physically impulsive style.

Family: Married to Tiare, who is Tongan/Hawaiian/Filipino. Two children, Maile who is two and baby Ikaika when books start. He is a family man above all and tries to do equal parenting with Tiare who is a nurse and wedding planner. Children eventually go to Kamehameha Schools on Maui.

Special Agent Marcella Scott (Scatalina) Lei’s best friend

Marcella Scott

Age 29

Height 5’6”, weight 135 voluptuous but athletic figure

Occupation: FBI agent. All she ever wanted to do, rebelling against her loving, smothering Italian parents who followed her to Hawaii and live in Waikiki.

Education: BA in Criminal Justice. Currently working on MA in Criminal Psychology at UH Manoa. Speaks Italian. Early hero was Catwoman.

Pet: Betta fish. Hobbies: belly dancing, martial arts/fitness, and shoes.

Currently engaged to Marcus Kamuela, a Hawaiian detective in Honolulu Police Department.

Secondary/peripheral characters:

Keiki (Lei's Rottweiler)

Consuelo Aguilar (Lei's special protégé, a young Robin Hood personality Lei captures in Broken Ferns, Book 4)

Marcus Kamuela, Hawaiian detective with HPD (Marcella's fiancé)

Wayne Texeira (Lei's ex-con father, who was converted in prison and goes to AA and church religiously)

Aunty Rosario Texeira, (Lei's guardian, dies in Dark Lava, Book 7)

Captain C.J. Omura, Lei and Stevens' commanding officer on Maui. Called the Steel Butterfly. Japanese, fashionable, all business.

Jack Jenkins, young white detective with crew cut, Lei's partner on Kauai.

Terence Chang III, grandson of crime bosses Healani and Terry Chang from Big Island, computer savvy possible mastermind

Soga Matsumoto, Lei's grandfather. Lives on Oahu. Traditional Japanese.

Special Agent Ken Yamada: Lei's ex-partner in FBI. Japanese, closet gay, great agent.

Jared Stevens: Stevens's younger brother, firefighter. Brown hair, blue eyes, similar build to Stevens.