

Who is Lip's Mother?

LIP'S MOTHER

Age: Mid-40s | Baltimore, Maryland

The Mother. The Fighter. The Woman Teaching Her Son How to Live While Fighting for Her Own Life.

UNDERSTANDING LIP'S MOTHER

Lip's Mother is one of the emotional anchors of **DEEP**.

She doesn't have money.

She doesn't have power.

She isn't connected to Morelli, Williams, or the dangerous worlds moving around the other characters.

But she possesses something incredibly important:

WISDOM.

She is seriously ill. Her bedroom has essentially become a hospital room. She struggles physically, and Lip can see that she's getting worse.

She knows her son sees it.

And she knows something else:

HER SON IS SCARED.

But rather than allowing her illness to become the center of Lip's life, she's trying to prepare him for a world he may eventually have to face without her.

That is the heart of this character.

WHO SHE IS

Lip's Mother is loving, strong-willed, perceptive, humorous, wise, protective and tired.

But don't play her as defeated.

Her body may be struggling.

Her spirit isn't.

That's the distinction the actress needs to understand.

When Lip brings her food, watches her struggle to eat or worries about her medication, she can see exactly what he's doing.

He's monitoring her.

Studying her.

Trying to determine whether she's getting worse.

A MOTHER KNOWS WHEN HER CHILD IS WATCHING HER LIKE THAT.

And she doesn't want him living every day waiting for her to die.

ERIC — NOT LIP

Everybody outside may call him **Lip**.

SHE CALLS HIM ERIC.

That matters.

The streets see Lip.
His friends see Lip.
Phil sees Lip.
Tavon sees Lip.
But his mother sees the boy she raised.

ERIC.

When she's talking to him, she's not talking to the persona he's trying to build outside.
She's talking to her son.
That relationship should immediately soften him.

SHE KNOWS HER SON

Eric doesn't have to tell her everything.
She can read him.
She knows when he's worried.
She knows when he's avoiding something.
She knows when he's trying to protect her.
And she probably understands that he's becoming increasingly frustrated by something neither of them can control:

HER ILLNESS.

Lip wants to fix things.
He wants medicine to work.
He wants money to solve something.
He wants somebody to tell him what to do.
But there are some things a fifteen-year-old boy simply cannot fix.
She knows that.

HE DOESN'T ACCEPT IT YET.

THE HARD CONVERSATION

Lip's Mother tries to have a difficult conversation with him.
Eric doesn't want it.
That's important.

DON'T FORCE THE CONVERSATION ON HIM EMOTIONALLY.

She understands why he's avoiding it.
He doesn't want to imagine losing her.
So when she talks about life, fairness and the kind of man he will become, she's doing something much bigger than giving advice.

SHE'S PREPARING HIM.

She may not know how much time she has.
So the lessons matter.

"FAIR"

One of her most important ideas is:

"Fair is something people made up because we needed life to make sense."

That's not bitterness.

Don't play it bitter.

She isn't saying:

Life screwed me.

She's teaching Eric that spending his life demanding fairness from an unfair world will destroy him.

Then she gives him the lesson she really wants him to understand:

"You don't get to choose everything life puts in front of you baby. You just get to choose what kind of man is standing there when it does."

That's Lip's Mother.

She can't control what's happening to her.

But she can control **who she is while it's happening.**

And she wants Eric to learn the same thing.

"LIVE YOUR LIFE SO GOOD..."

Then comes the heart of her philosophy:

"Live your life so good... fair don't matter."

Don't perform this like you're delivering the theme of the television series.

It's a mother talking to her son.

Simple.

Personal.

Maybe she's been thinking about this for a long time.

Maybe she's learned it the hard way.

SAY IT TO ERIC.

Not to the audience.

That's what will make it powerful.

HER ILLNESS

The actress needs to respect the physical reality of the character.

She's seriously ill.

She struggles to eat.

Her bedroom functions like a hospital room.

But—

DON'T "ACT SICK" EVERY SECOND.

That's one of the easiest ways to make the performance feel artificial.

Her illness is her normal now.

She's living inside it.

Some moments may be worse than others.

Sometimes speaking may take more energy.

Sometimes eating may be difficult.

Sometimes she may need to recover her breath.

But don't constantly remind the audience:

I'm sick.

THE PRODUCTION AND THE STORY WILL TELL US THAT.

Your job is to give us the woman inside the illness.

THE SOUP

Lip watches her struggle with the soup.

That's a very intimate moment.

She knows he's watching.

He sees something she probably doesn't want him to see:

THIS IS HARD FOR HER.

The actress shouldn't turn it into a dramatic event.

Try.

Maybe another bite.

Maybe you don't want Eric seeing how difficult it is.

Maybe you redirect the conversation.

That's what parents do.

THE MORE SHE TRIES TO PROTECT HIM FROM HER CONDITION, THE MORE WE FEEL HOW SERIOUS IT IS.

THE MEDICATION

She gives Eric the scratched pill bottle and needs him to get it refilled or adjusted.

To Eric, that bottle becomes extremely important.

It's something tangible he can actually do.

HE CAN'T CURE HIS MOTHER.

But he can get her medicine.

That gives him a mission.

So when Phil later knocks those pills away and they scatter—the audience understands why Lip's reaction is so emotional.

Those aren't just pills.

THEY REPRESENT HIS ABILITY TO HELP HIS MOTHER.

THE BOTTLE

There's a beautiful idea in her dialogue:

"The bottle is just the container son. It's what's on the inside that counts."

Then:

"I got good stuff inside my bottle. I'm going to be just fine."

The actress should understand the double meaning without performing the double meaning.

She's talking about the bottle.

But she's also talking about herself.

Her body is the container.

It may be failing her.

BUT SHE DOESN'T BELIEVE THAT'S ALL SHE IS.

That's an important spiritual and emotional layer to the character.

Don't underline it.

Let the audience discover it.

SHE MAKES HIM GO TO SCHOOL

Eric wants to stay.

He sees she's worse.

He doesn't want to leave her.

SHE MAKES HIM GO.

That's love.

She doesn't want her illness swallowing his childhood.

She doesn't want him sitting beside her bed all day.

She wants him living.

School.

Friends.

Life.

A future.

Even when part of him wants to remain there and protect her.

SHE'S STILL HIS MOTHER.

Sick or not.

And when she tells him what to do—
he's still her child.

DON'T PLAY HER AS A SAINT

This is important.

She can be irritated.

Tired.

Stubborn.

Funny.

Short with him.

Maybe she doesn't always want to talk.

Maybe she's sick of everybody asking how she feels.

LET HER BE HUMAN.

Strength doesn't mean perfection.

Wisdom doesn't mean she speaks in inspirational quotes all day.

She's a mother dealing with something incredibly difficult.

Some days she may handle it beautifully.

Other days may hurt.

That's life.

DON'T PLAY THE DEATH

We don't want the actress performing every scene as though she's saying
goodbye.

SHE'S ALIVE.

That's critical.

She's living today.

She's raising her son today.

She's eating today.
She's talking today.
She's worrying about Eric today.
She may understand the seriousness of her condition, but that doesn't mean every
look at her son should say:
Remember me when I'm gone.
That's too heavy.
Let the possibility live underneath the scene.

FOR THE ACTRESS

YOUR OBJECTIVE IS NOT TO MAKE ERIC CRY.

Your objective is to prepare him.
Protect him.
Keep him moving.
Teach him.
And sometimes—

CONVINCE HIM YOU'RE STRONGER THAN YOU FEEL.

That last part matters.
Eric is watching.
So there may be moments when she has to perform strength **for her son.**
The actress is therefore doing something subtle:
You're not pretending the character isn't sick.

THE CHARACTER IS SOMETIMES PRETENDING SHE'S OKAY.

There's a huge difference.

LET HIM SEE THE CRACKS

She can't hide everything.
Maybe she thinks Eric isn't looking.
Maybe he leaves the room.
Maybe the smile disappears.
Maybe exhaustion takes over.
Maybe eating becomes harder.
Those little private moments allow us to understand:
SHE'S PROTECTING HIM MORE THAN HE REALIZES.
But keep them small.

LIP'S FUTURE

She can see something happening inside her son.
He's reaching an age where the world is beginning to define manhood for him.
Respect.
Money.
Fear.
Power.
Toughness.

She wants to give him another definition before somebody else does.

"YOU JUST GET TO CHOOSE WHAT KIND OF MAN IS STANDING THERE WHEN IT DOES."

That is her attempt to give Eric an internal compass.

Unfortunately, after leaving her room, he encounters Phil.

Then Tavon.

And Tavon has his own definition of survival.

That makes her scenes incredibly important.

TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS ARE TEACHING LIP WHAT IT MEANS TO BECOME A MAN.

His mother teaches character.

Tavon's world teaches power.

Eric is caught between them.

EMOTIONAL RANGE

The actress needs access to:

love, humor, exhaustion, physical weakness, strength, frustration, wisdom, fear, protectiveness, tenderness and hope.

But again—

don't show everything at once.

The most powerful moments may be the ones where she feels one thing and shows Eric another.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Don't play constantly sick.

Don't play constantly sad.

Don't play every conversation like a goodbye.

Don't make her weak.

Don't make her saintly.

Don't turn her wisdom into speeches.

Don't overplay physical symptoms.

Don't beg the audience for sympathy.

Don't make Eric responsible for your emotions.

And don't forget:

SHE IS STILL THE PARENT.

Even from that bed.

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

We're looking for an actress with **emotional depth, warmth, maturity, natural authority and tremendous honesty.**

Someone capable of showing physical vulnerability without allowing the illness to become the entire performance.

Someone who can look at Eric and make us believe:

THAT IS MY BABY.

Someone who can deliver wisdom conversationally rather than theatrically.
Someone who can make us laugh for a moment and break our hearts the next without forcing either.
And someone who understands that the strongest thing this woman does may be:
MAKING HER SON BELIEVE SHE'S GOING TO BE OKAY WHEN SHE HERSELF MAY NOT KNOW.

THE HEART OF LIP'S MOTHER

Lip believes he's taking care of his mother.

Bringing her food.

Watching her medication.

Trying to stay home.

Worrying.

Protecting her.

But underneath all of that—

SHE'S STILL TAKING CARE OF HIM.

She's preparing Eric for something she desperately wishes she could protect him from forever:

LIFE WITHOUT GUARANTEES.

She can't promise him fairness.

She can't promise him that nothing bad will happen.

She can't even promise him that she'll always be there.

So she gives him something better.

A way to stand when life becomes unfair.

"You don't get to choose everything life puts in front of you baby. You just get to choose what kind of man is standing there when it does."

That's what she's leaving inside him.

And if Eric remembers it when the world begins pulling him toward darkness—

THEN A PART OF HIS MOTHER IS STILL PROTECTING HIM.

That's Lip's Mother.

Now show us your version of her.