

Taraji P. Henson,

what do you look for in acting roles?

I want the character to scare me. If I'm not scared, I'm not moved. With my role in *Hidden Figures* the fear was that, growing up, I was told math wasn't for girls. I shied away from it. Now, I had to play this rocket scientist—a real living, breathing person—you think that's not scary? As for my character in *Empire*, Cookie scares the average person. I didn't know how she would be perceived. But the one thing about Cookie is that she unapologetically lives and walks in her truth. I think everyone wishes they could do that.



See Taraji in new episodes of *Empire*, beginning March 22.