

“Take an aspirin, maybe a cough drop,” his father said. Woods Boone seldom saw a doctor and believed most people spent far too much money on medications.

“Can you cough again for us, Teddy?” his mother asked. As a mother, she was slightly more sympathetic when he felt bad. The truth was that Theo had a history of faking it, especially when he had something better to do than go to school.

His father started laughing. “Yes, it was a pretty lame cough, Theo, even by your standards.”

“I could be dying,” Theo said, trying not to laugh.

“Yes, but you’re not,” his father said. “And if you show up in the courtroom tomorrow Judge Gantry will have you arrested as a truant.”

“You know any good lawyers?” Theo shot back. His mother burst out laughing, and, eventually, Woods saw the humor.

“Go to bed,” he said.

Theo limped up the stairs, thoroughly defeated, with Judge trailing behind. In bed, he opened his laptop and checked on April. He was relieved when she answered,

APRILNPARIS: Hi, Theo. How are you?

TBOONEESQ: Okay. Where are you?