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Margaret: Here is Reverend Mother, Mr. Homes. She can explain the situation to you. *[remains quietly in the room throughout the conversation. Homes and Arson walk toward Mother Superior.]*

Homes: Hello, ma'am. I'm Padlock Homes, and this is my friend and colleague, Dr. Arson.

Martha: Arson?

Arson: Yep, that's me!

Martha: *[skeptical]* That's a strange name.

Arson: Yeah, you know, pyromania, incendiarism.... Ring any bells?

Martha: Sounds criminal to me!

Arson: *[indignant]* What? Homes, she just insulted me!

Homes: *[raises his hand to quiet Arson]* Secondary, my dear Arson; it's of no consequence.

Mother Superior: *[reclaiming the conversation]* Welcome, Mr. Homes, Dr. Arson. We're very glad you've come to help us.

Homes: I only hope we can be of assistance. What exactly seems to be the trouble? I hear something's gone missing?

Mother Superior: Not just something, Mr. Homes, but a very important, highly treasured relic. *[Arson is already writing rapidly on his notepad.]*

Martha: The Splinter.

Homes: *[clueless]* The splinter?

Mother Superior: *The Splinter.*

Homes: *[still unenlightened]* And...what splinter would that be?

Martha: *[matter-of-factly]* The only one of its kind on the face of the earth.

Mother Superior: Well, as far as we know.

Arson: *[looks up from his notepad eagerly]* Would it make good kindling? *[Both nuns gasp.]*

Mother Superior: Certainly not! We wouldn't dream of setting fire to such a precious heirloom!

Martha: Good grief! You sure live up to your name, don't you? *[Arson shrugs and returns to his notepad.]*

Homes: But what *is* it?

Mother Superior: *[solemnly, almost reverently]* The Splinter is a tiny shard of wood from a rocking chair that belonged to St. Joseph's great-great-aunt's cousin's son's wife.

Martha: Wait, wasn't it St. Joseph's great-great-uncle's cousin's son's daughter?

Mother Superior: No, sister, I'm quite sure it was St. Joseph's great-great-aunt's cousin's son's wife.

Martha: Huh. I was almost certain it was uncle and daughter, but...you're the Mother Superior, so I guess you're right.

Arson: *[Homes and Arson are still staring at Mother Superior with blank looks on their faces.]*
But...that's it? I think we were expecting something more...more....

Martha: *[a bit defensive]* Yeah? What are you trying to say?

Arson: *[awkward]* Well, in general, where there's smoke there's a fire, you know? But this....

Homes: *[sarcastic and a bit annoyed, to Mother Superior]* You're saying you called me out here on Christmas Eve to find a tiny piece of wood that belongs to...who knows?

Mother Superior: *[sighs and looks up at Martha]* Oh the oblivion of the masses. *[looks back at Homes]* Mr. Homes, The Splinter may seem unimportant to you, but it is a priceless treasure to us. You must find it — please!

Homes: *[sighs]* Well...I suppose if it matters that much, then I'll do my best to help. But I can't do anything without data. *[pulls out his magnifying glass]*

Arson: Hey, I bet you could start a fire with that thing.

Martha: Seriously? Are you that obsessed?

Arson: They don't call me Arson for nothing!

Homes: *[to Mother Superior]* So, when did you realize that the splinter was missing?

Mother Superior: Sister Mary Matilda discovered it this morning.

Homes: Oh, the other nuns are involved in this as well?

Mother Superior: Yes.

Homes: Then I will need everyone in here so I can ask some questions.

Mother Superior: Certainly. Sister Mary Margaret? *[Margaret doesn't hear.] [Mother Superior repeats, louder]* Sister Mary Margaret?

Martha: *[taps Margaret's shoulder]* Margaret, she's talking to you.

Margaret: Oh! *[laughing]* That is my name, isn't it. I quite forgot. Yes, Reverend Mother, what can I do for you?

Mother Superior: Please summon the other sisters.

Margaret: Yes, Reverend Mother. *[yells]* Hey everyone! Mother Superior wants to see you all!

Mother Superior: *[winces, looks up at Margaret]* Go out and find them, sister.

Margaret: Oh, of course. *[exits]*

Homes: *[aside to Arson]* I don't think her elevator goes all the way to the top floor.

Arson: *[nodding, taps his head]* Chimney's clogged, I'd say.

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End of script preview.