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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.**