

**Labrador City Collegiate
Labrador City
Presents**

“The Cold Within”

Cast

The Poor Sarah Costello
The Greedy Erin Coish
Narrator Jodi Saunders
Narrator Tina Barnes
The Religious Blair Tulk
The Black Adam Coish
The Rich Catherine Schwab
The White Sherri Strickland

Teacher/advisors

Donna Walters
Emerson Coish



“THE COLD WITHIN”

(The song “Imagine” by the Beatles plays before the curtain rises.)

(Curtain rises. Lights dimly lit on a backdrop of a plane crash. There is a small fire on center stage. Six people are walking around the stage, shivering with cold. Then, from stage right, one of the two narrators, dressed in a long black robe and hood, proceeds slowly downstage, creating a somewhat spiritual effect. The narrator then reads.)

Narrator 1: *(first verse)* **Six humans trapped by happenstance
In black and bitter cold
Each one possessed a stick of wood
Or so the story’s told.**

(When the narrator slowly backs up behind the trees, the focus turns upon the small group. Nobody is talking, except for a few murmurs. As they walk around, each one picks up a stick for the dying fire. No one, however, puts their stick in the fire. They all gather around the fire in a semi-circle formation. Some hold their hands out to the fire to warm them. They sit (L-R Poor, White, Rich, Religious, Black, Greedy Moslem) Black and white first start to sit beside each other but the white glares at the black and forces him to move. The rich wipes off her log and then sits on it. They all protect their wood. Then all movement stops as the second narrator appears from stage left.)

Narrator 2: *(second verse)* **Their dying fire in need of logs
The first woman held hers back
For on the faces around the fire
She noticed one was black.**

(When the narrator goes upstage, the white looks around and tentatively holds her stick towards the fire. The black starts to play the mouth organ to the tune of “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”, unaware that the white is glaring at him. He plays until his gaze meets the white’s. He lets his tune trail off and looks at the white expectantly, waiting for her to put her stick in the fire. The white quickly pulls her stick behind her, making it clear she will not part with her stick.)

White woman: I can stand the cold a lot more than I can stand that bloody black music.

(Everyone looks at her, shocked at her statement. They look at each other. The black first looks surprised, then suddenly clutches his stick fiercely and glares at the white who is glaring right back. The black looks down at his stick. Then all movement stops and narrator 1 appears.)

Narrator 1: *(third verse)* **The next man looking cross the way
Saw one not of his church,
And couldn’t bring himself to give**

The fire, his stick of birch.

(When the narrator fades from sight, everyone is looking down at their stick, except for the religious man, who is looking around. His gaze rests on the greedy Moslem woman. He looks at her strangely, because she is of another faith. He blesses himself and says another prayer.)

Religious Man: Oh, Lord, protect me from this bitter cold. I've served you all my days. Save me, Lord, now so that I may bring heathens like that dirty Moslem to Your truth. *(Sneers at Moslem)* They are the servants of Satan but I have been baptized in Your Holy name, Lord. Save me. Lord Christ, save me!!!

(He holds his crucifix and raises it heavenward. The greedy Moslem looks offended by his statement. Everybody else is looking at them in interest. The second narrator then reappears and all of the movement stops.)

Narrator 2: *(fourth verse)* **The third one sat in tattered clothes
She gave her coat a hitch
Why should her log be put to use
To warm the idle rich?**

(When the narrator leaves again, the rich woman is looking at the poor in distaste. They establish eye contact and the rich woman eyes her log.)

Rich Woman: Why don't you put your log in the fire? You certainly look cold enough with that dreadful old coat of yours.

(The poor woman looks at her with surprise and anger.)

Poor Woman: I spent half of my cheque for this coat. It's warm and I'll be just fine. I don't need your handouts. I may not have much but what I've got I worked hard for and I'll be ten toes up before I share it with you! If you're so cold, why don't you burn your money? Or, better yet, throw yourself in! At least you'll be warm!

(The rich woman, sputtering, hurriedly looked for something to say. Finding nothing, she glares at the poor woman and puts her nose in the air. Narrator 1, once again, moves downstage.)

Narrator 1: *(fifth verse)* **The rich just sat back and thought
Of wealth she had in store.
And how to keep what she had earned
From the lazy, shiftless poor.**

(The narrator leaves and the rich takes out her purse, pulls out a nail file and starts filing her nails. The poor woman just looks at her in disgust.)

Poor Woman: Why don't YOU put your log in the fire? I am sure you can afford it.

Rich Woman: I paid more than all of you for a first class ticket - yet here I am, sitting on a filthy log. It's so uncomfortable, but I must keep it because I can't ruin my fur!

(The rich woman puts away her file and starts fixing her hair, while the poor draws her knees up to her chest to keep warm. Angry, she stares at her stick and refuses to look at the rich woman, who has a smug expression on her face. The movement stops and narrator 2 returns.)

Narrator 2: *(sixth verse)* **The black man's face bespoke revenge
As the fire passed from his sight,
For all he saw in his stick of wood
Was a chance to spite the white.**

(Narrator 2 leaves and the black clutches his stick with fire in his eyes. He glanced at the white, who was watching the fire. The black follows her gaze and sees that the fire is almost out. There is only a flicker left. The white shifts her gaze to the black.)

White Woman: Put your stick in the fire, slave.

Black Man: *(glaring at the white in anger)* I've been a slave long enough. I'll die a thousand times over before I bow down to you whites again!

(The white can't find anything to say and looks down at her stick in anger. She will not part with her stick, even though the fire is almost out. Everybody freezes and the first narrator returns.)

Narrator 1: *(seventh verse)* **And the last one of the forlorn group
Did not except for gain.
Giving only to those who gave
Was how she played the game.**

(The narrator fades back and the greedy Moslem looks at everyone in turn and then at the fire.)

Greedy Moslem: Why doesn't someone put their stick in the fire? It may save us.

Religious Man: Why don't you?

Greedy Moslem: Maybe I will. I think I will light my own little fire.

Rich Woman: That's NOT fair! I need it too!

Greedy Moslem: I will not do anything for any of you. You don't get something for nothing here. I take care of myself!

Religious Man: Fine. See you in a better place.....if you even make it there.

(The rich woman and the religious man look at the greedy Moslem with hatred in their eyes. Then everyone stops moving as the fire is almost completely gone and the second narrator returns.)

Narrator 2: *(eighth verse)* **The logs held tight in death's still hands
Was proof of human sin.
They didn't die from the cold without,
They died from the cold within.**

(When the narrator is finished, all of the characters lay down and the first narrator comes out. By now the fire is completely out. The two narrators then cover the group and the fire with long black cloths. The lights dim and the narrators exit. The lights go out. All you can hear is the song "One Tin Soldier".)