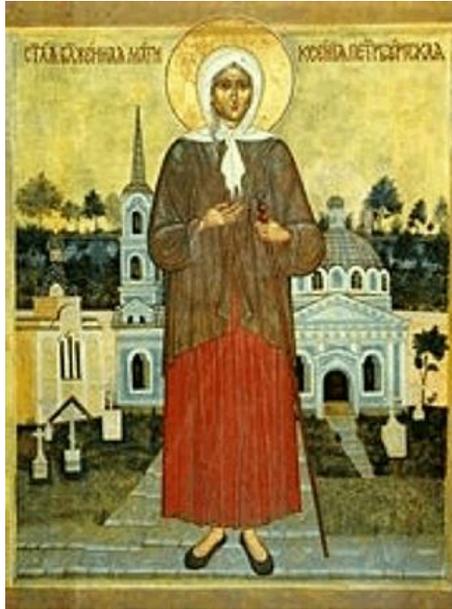




**A Dramatic Presentation
of
The Life of
Saint Xenia of St. Petersburg**



Written by Popadia Junia Tolbert

Permission to use this play is granted to youth and church groups. No permission is given to reprint for sale, to publish or to sell this work in any format without express permission from the author.

Additional plays are being prepared for publication. These include the following lives of saints:

St. Sophia and her Three Daughters: Faith, Hope and Charity

St. Longinus

St. Eustathius

Saints Perpetua and Felicity

St. Innocent of Alaska

The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus

The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste

The Great Battle in Heaven (a simple play for younger children)

Directors Guide to the Plays (includes additional information on staging, costuming, and props)

Each of these plays has been performed many times with church groups and at week long summer camps. The age of the children ranged from eight to thirteen, but most would be suitable for older age groups as well.

Address all correspondence to Popadia Junia Tolbert at:
sttheophan@sbcglobal.net



BOYA Edition 2019

© 2006, 2009, 2014, 2019 by Junia Tolbert

Forward
From the Author

This play has been written in honor of St. Xenia of St. Petersburg. The intention is to provide something for youth groups and summer camp activities to have for a focus learning and presenting the life of this wonderful saint to other members attending, and thus to serve two goals – for our youth to experience in their words and deeds the life of a saint, and to thus tell the story to others, making them teachers as well.

Every effort has been made to be faithful to the actual facts in the life of St. Xenia. Parasceva Antonova, Mrs. Golubev and her daughter, and Mrs. Krapavina were real people that St. Xenia knew, and the information about them related in this play is true, according the Orthodox life of St. Xenia that has been written.

In reading the life of St. Theodore of Sanaxar, (Little Russian Philokalia, Vol.4) one reads that he “served in the elite Preobrazhensky regiment in St. Petersburg and was personally known to Empress Elizabeth Petrovna. However, shaken by the sudden death of one of his companions, he abandoned his life of ease and advantage and fled to the wilderness to take up a life of repentance and prayer.”

Whether his companion was in fact Andrei Theodorovich, husband of St. Xenia, is not known. But it certainly could have been, as they were in the same circles, at the same time. I have therefore added a “Theodore” in the first part of the play, with this in mind.

Although other characters are fictional, the situations portrayed follow the type of events known to have happened during St. Xenia’s life.

Many thanks to those who have preserved and continue the veneration of St. Xenia, especially the sisters of St. Xenia Skete in Wildwood, California, whose veneration of her is an inspiration, and to all who have printed and put information about her online. Special thanks to Holy Trinity Monastery Press, Jrdanville, New York, for their English publication, *The Life and Miracles of Blessed Xenia of St. Petersburg* which they have kept in print for the past three decades.

~~~~~

**Troparion to St. Xenia  
Tone 8**

**In thee, O wandering stranger, Christ the Lord hath given us  
an ardent intercessor for our kind.  
For having received in thy life sufferings and grief,  
and served God and men with love,  
thou didst acquire great boldness.  
Wherefore we fervently hasten to thee in temptations and grief,  
Crying out from the depths of our hearts:  
Put not our hope to shame, O Blessed Xenia.**

## **Cast of Characters**

**Narrator**

**Xenia Grigorievna**

**Andrei Theodorovich**

**Marie**

**Dimitri**

**Theodore**

**Parasceva Antonova**

**Guest 1&2**

**Doctor**

**Katya**

**Xenia's Aunt**

**Xenia's Uncle**

**Porter**

**Trustees 1&2**

**Misha**

**Petrov**

**Nina**

**Coachman**

**Volodya**

**A Young Mother**

**Firemen 1 & 2**

**Policeman**

**Man**

**Woman**

**Mrs. Golubev**

**Mrs. Golubev's Daughter**

**Mrs. Krapivina**

**Vladimir**

**Pavlov**

**Alexi**

## Table of Contents

|                 |                                                                    |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Act 1: Scene 1: | Xenia and Andrei at home                                           |
| Scene 2:        | A Collapse at the Party                                            |
| Scene 3:        | Grieving for Andrei                                                |
| Scene 4:        | Giving alms for prayers for Andrei                                 |
| Scene 5:        | Relatives try to prevent Xenia's actions                           |
| Scene 6:        | Xenia appears before the Estate Trustees                           |
| Act 2: Scene 1: | Townfolk discuss Xenia's return                                    |
| Scene 2:        | Townfolk talk of Xenia's miraculous aid                            |
| Scene 3:        | Townfolk talk of Xenia's aid and healings                          |
| Scene 4:        | Xenia foretells a house fire                                       |
| Scene 5:        | Xenia sends Parasceva to the cemetery for a son                    |
| Scene 6:        | A Child for Parasceva                                              |
| Scene 7:        | The honey is spilled                                               |
| Scene 8:        | Foretelling the death of the Tsar & Finding a husband for a friend |
| Scene 9:        | A funeral & a new acquaintance                                     |
| Scene 10:       | Xenia foretells a death                                            |
| Scene 11:       | Workmen are helped building a church                               |
| Scene 12:       | Conclusion of her life                                             |

# A Dramatic Presentation of The Life of Saint Xenia of St. Petersburg

## Act 1: Scene 1

*Xenia's house*

**Xenia, Andrei, Marie**

**Narrator:** Xenia Grigorievna was born around the year 1730, and lived in St. Petersburg during the reigns of the Empresses Elizabeth Petrovna and Catherine II. She was married to the imperial chorister, Colonel Andrei Theodorovich Petrov. Little is known about her life up to this point, but because of her marriage, we may assume that her family was part of the lesser nobility in Russia, and that she led an ordinary, though comfortable life. It would seem that she was happily married and completely devoted to her husband who was, perhaps, a bit worldly.

*(Open curtain)*

*(Xenia seated before a mirror, Marie fixing her hair, husband enters and stands a moment watching)*

**Andrei:** Ah, my dear, light of my eyes! Your hair is lovely. Nothing could improve the woman I love.

**Xenia:** *(rises)* Andrei! I did not hear you come in, my dearest. *(Moves toward her coat)*

**Andrei:** And you are ready to go? Perfect in all things! You never keep me waiting.

**Xenia:** Andrei, how could I? Such an important man! And the dearest of husbands!

**Andrei:** How is it that in all of Russia, I am the luckiest man of all? That you should be my wife!

**Xenia:** To be your wife is the joy of my life! Every day is a complete joy—I long for nothing else, but to be near you, taking care of your home, and thinking of you. (*Brushing off his coat*) My colonel, before you sing for the Empress, this coat must be brushed! Marie, the Colonel's coat needs ...

(*Marie turns with a curtsy and clothes brush.*)

**Andrei:** (*waves Marie away*) Thank you my dear, but tomorrow is time enough for that. Duty may be fulfilled tomorrow. Tonight is before us, and we shall spend it dancing and drinking! A meeting of friends and a toast to the joy of life! Come let us go, or we will miss the fun of it.

***Exit Xenia and Andrei.***

(*Close curtain*)

## Act 1: Scene 2

*Ballroom*

**Xenia, Andrei, Dimitri, Theodore, Parasceva Antonova, 2 guests, Doctor** (*Xenia is talking with Parasceva Antonova, other women nearby, music playing*)

**Parasceva:** It has been a lovely evening, hasn't it, Xenia Grigorievna? I shall hate to have it end.

**Xenia:** So shall I, and so shall Andrei. He loves to join with the men of his company for an evening like this. But, the way they are drinking! Does it take so much alcohol for men to enjoy themselves?

**Parasceva:** They do seem to be drinking more than usual, and when Russian men try to out drink one another, well, who will be the one to say enough!?

**Xenia:** (*Nods*) And when the men of that elite Preobrazhensky Regiment join in, none of them will call a halt to their merriment. You see, Theodore is with them, and another.

**Parasceva:** Yes, I see. But the music is starting up again. Perhaps they will continue to dance instead of drink!

**Xenia:** I am sure they will, for Andrei has been dancing tonight as I have never seen him! With such fire! I love to watch him. (*They turn to look.*)

**Parasceva:** He has danced tonight with a special flare. But the room is so hot!

**Xenia:** Yes, his cheeks look quite red. Perhaps I will ask him to take a walk along the balcony with me for some fresh air and a little quiet.

**Andrei:** Another drink my friend! The vodka must flow tonight!

**Dimitri:** You shall have it! Never have I seen you dance as you have tonight!

**Theodore:** Andrei, you dance us into the ground! You have indeed bested all the division tonight!

**Andrei:** Ah, Theodore, you have not tried your hardest!

**Theodore:** You think not? Then perhaps we shall try once more, yes?

**Dimitri:** Yes, again you shall dance! The music is playing, and the sun is still hidden away! What will stop you?

**Andrei:** Nothing shall stop me! And if I best you again, very well, but if not, what of it! I dance for the pleasure of it, and pleasure I shall have! The drink only makes it better. Another vodka, and I dance forever!

*(Music louder, he begins dancing and whirling. Suddenly he grabs his chest, staggers and falls.)*

**Xenia:** Andrei! Andrei! *(Runs to him, on the floor)*

**Parasceva:** What has happened?

**Guest 1:** Who has fallen?

**Dimitri:** Back, give him air! Andrei, enough of this joke! We will let you rest. Andrei!

**Theodore:** It is no joke, Dimitri. A doctor! Is there a doctor? Andrei Theodorovich has collapsed.

**Doctor:** *(Pushes through)* Let me see him. *(Takes a moment examining him.)*

**Xenia:** Surely, he will be all right?

**Theodore:** Of course, Xenia Grigorievna. He will be back with us in a moment. He was not ill. It is perhaps a dizzy spell.

**Doctor:** (*Finishes examining him, rises, shakes head.*) I am sorry. The young colonel will dance no more. He is dead.

**All:** Gasp! Gospodie pomeloi!

(*People crossing themselves, shaking their heads*)

**Xenia:** Gospodie pomeloi!

**(Close curtain)**

## Act 1: Scene 3

*Parlor, After the Funeral*

**Parasceva Antonova, aunt, uncle, Theodore**

**Parasceva :** This is too sad! My heart is breaking for her. She weeps and prays, and prays and weeps all day long. How can her heart know peace with a death such as this!

**Aunt:** Her tears never stop. What a shock this has been. Andrei seemed so strong, as if nothing could hurt him. And here she is, a widow at 26 years of age. My poor niece...

**Theodore:** Who could have imagined such a thing! One minute we were dancing and laughing together, the next, he is gone...gone from this world.

**Uncle:** He seemed to have everything! And now – he has only his grave. Not even the Holy Mysteries before he died! The thought of dying with no time to prepare makes my blood run cold. How much grace can a man expect when he is dead if he lives only for himself and the fulfillment of his pleasures and gives no thought for his soul?

**Aunt:** Quiet! Do not speak of such things. What are you thinking? This is our Andrei!

**Uncle:** Of course it is our Andrei! But look at what has happened! How can you ask what am I thinking? I am thinking that his time ran out before he had time to repent! I know how he lived, for the moment only. Never do we think we will meet God on such short notice!

**Parasceva:** (*Crosses herself*) And that is just the thing we should be thinking of every moment.

**Theodore:** I myself have been in the same state of blindness, taking for granted that life will be long, and there will be time

for all things. A remembrance of one's soul before God is not something to leave for later!

**Aunt:** You are right, of course. But a man must live his life. We are here, are we not? How can one live as if he is in heaven, while he is here?

**Uncle:** I do not know, but I am sure that it is important for me to find out! If we do not live looking toward heaven, can we expect to go there when we die? God will have mercy, but we must do our part, I think!

**Theodore:** Sir, you are speaking the words of my heart also. We must take care for our own souls, even as we pray for our friend Andrei Theodorovich, who can no longer take care of his own.

**Uncle:** And in what state will the Lord find our Andrei Theodorovich, I wonder?

**Parasceva:** I know this very question is burning in Xenia's heart. As I helped her dress this morning, she hardly knew I was there, but kept murmuring about Andrei's soul—where was he, and how would God have mercy on her Andrei, who paid God so little attention? Then she roused herself and looked about her rooms, and said "This is nothing. All of this is without meaning. All of our lives were wasted on nothing. I want nothing more of this world's riches. What riches can my poor Andrei Theodorovich have now?"

**Aunt:** Such a sorrow. But, she is in shock. Xenia will feel better as time passes and the memories fade. It is the way of things.

**Uncle:** To grieve after such a shock is good, and to take this as a warning for our own souls is wisdom.

**Theodore:** For myself, I think I must turn to a new life. I cannot go back to my old ways after this. A pilgrimage, perhaps, and some time alone to pray in a monastery.

**Uncle:** Steady yourself, Theodore. We must indeed look to our souls, but this is not a time for rash decisions. Your life is not unworthy, and nothing to turn away from. Wait a while, and see if time does not make things look different for you, as we hope it will for Xenia.

**Theodore:** Thank you for your words, sir, but my heart stirs now in recognition of the God of all, our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom I have taken all and to whom I have given nothing all my life. I do not know how long He will give me before my end, but I pray it will be long enough that I may find salvation!

**Aunt:** Theodore, you are seized with grief for your friend. The future is not so bleak as it may appear—not for you, or for Xenia. She is young, and will have no worries about money. Andrei has left her all she needs and more. With her youth and wealth, she may find another husband in a few years.

**Parasceva:** Who is to say what will happen in the future? For now, let us do what we can to comfort her.

**(Close curtain)**

## Act 1: Scene 4

*Parlor*

**Aunt, Marie, Katya, Uncle**

**Aunt:** Marie, what do you mean Xenia Grigorievna gave you those jewels?

**Marie:** Madam, I am bringing them to you because I did not know what to do. She spoke so kindly to me, telling me I would need them to help my family, and that she had no need for them. But it is such a large gift, Madam, it did not seem quite proper.

**Aunt:** Proper! Indeed it is not! No need, she said?

**Katya:** And here are the pearls she gave to me. She said my service to her has been such a comfort, she wanted me to have them.

**Aunt:** You did well to come to me. You have both been with her many years. You may keep these things, for they are her gifts to you, but take no more. Your mistress is grieving so, I fear she does not know what she is doing. I must talk to her at once. *(Gets up to leave)*

**Marie:** Pardon, but the mistress is not here. She went out just after she spoke with us.

**Aunt:** Out? Where could she have gone? I did not hear the carriage leave....

**Katya:** I do not know where she was going, but she was walking, and carrying a large bundle.

**Aunt:** Xenia, Xenia! Walking in the streets alone? And still torn with grief!

**Uncle:** *(enters)* My dear, do you know what is going on outside? There is a group of beggars. When I told them to be gone, they said Xenia Grigorievna had sent them here to wait for her.

**Aunt:** Marie, Katya, quickly! Bring bread and cheese and meat. She must mean to serve the beggars food in the name of her husband. We will give it to them and send them away before she returns home and invites them inside!

*(Exit Marie & Katya)* Really, my husband, Xenia Grigorievna is behaving in a most unseemly way. She is giving away everything she puts her hand to. We must stop her!

**Uncle:** Yes. She seems to be quite beside herself. I do not know what to do. There are customs about giving alms for the dead, but they are not enough for her. *(Looks out the window)* Ah, she is coming. She should not be out amidst this rabble. It may not be safe for her. I will go out to help her make her way inside. *(Exits)*

**Aunt:** *(at window)* I can't quite see what is happening. What is she giving away? Why won't she come in with her uncle?  
*(Paces to & fro)* This is just too much!

**Uncle:** *(enters)* My wife, I fear this is going too far. She is not only giving alms, she is giving away her jewels. She sent Katya and Marie back inside to get her gowns and furs to distribute as well! She has been to the bank and has taken out a great deal of money. She is giving it all away.

**Aunt:** Has she lost her mind? What did she say to you?

**Uncle:** All she would say as she gave the things to that crowd was, "Pray for my Andrei. Pray!" I took her arm to come in, and she refused me, saying "We must have prayers for my Andrei, and I will give alms on his behalf!" What could I say?

**Aunt:** What could you say! She is out of her head with grief. Go, tell her we will have a service every day at church, and to come inside. She has given them enough! I will go with you, and we will bring her in. She should rest. This is all too much for her, I fear. We don't want her to collapse, too! And we must help her return to her senses!

**(Close curtain)**

## Act 1: Scene 5

*Parlor*

**Uncle, Aunt, Parasceva**

**Aunt:** Xenia Grigorievna must not continue in this way. It is not proper for a young widow to go about the city like this. She is giving away everything. Parasceva, as her friend, I asked you to come and talk to her. Bring her to her senses, where we have failed.

**Uncle:** What will she do when she awakens from this shock? She will have nothing left! We can take her in, but what sense is there in giving everything away!!

**Parasceva:** Xenia is my friend, and I pray she will always be so, but she is so changed. She does not seem out of her mind, but rather in a different mind. The death of Andrei Theodorovich has opened her eyes, I think, and she is looking into heaven instead of to earthly things.

**Aunt:** Then let her look to heaven, and leave her goods with us. Surely we can use them and have more right to them than these beggars. And who will feed and care for her? Will she no longer need to eat? What right has she to give away family estates?

**Uncle:** Whether the right is hers or not, I cannot say, but it is foolish! And she will not listen to us. She says that it is little enough to give, if it may help the soul of her Andrei. She asks everyone to pray for him.

**Aunt:** As if he were a criminal! A drunken foolish man with no thought of heaven, yes. But what is all the fuss over that? More than half the world is in the same state! How can it be so bad? He is dead already. I see no need to change *our* lives because of that!

**Parasceva:** Forgive me, but each soul stands before God alone, and each deed of our lives must be accounted for. Those things

which we do in heedlessness as well as those things of evil intent, count ill for us. Xenia Grigorievna fears for the very soul of her husband! And I think she sees more deeply into this than we do.

**Uncle:** You understand her, Parasceva. Make her understand that she must preserve enough to live on, and not disgrace the family. Giving alms is well and good, but enough is enough! People are beginning to talk.

**Aunt:** If Xenia Grigorievna will not listen to reason, the trustees of the estate must be called in to stop this madness. I will not have it!

**Parasceva:** To threaten her with worldly authority when she seeks to obey heavenly authority? How can this be right?

**Aunt:** What she is doing makes no sense. If it makes no sense, she is mad, and must be stopped for her own good until she returns to her senses and lives a respectable life in the world.

**(Close curtain)**

**Act 1:** Scene 6

*Waiting room/Legal office*

**Parasceva, Xenia, Porter, Trustee 1 and 2**

**Parasceva:** Xenia Grigorievna, I am so sorry it has come to this. I did not believe your family would force you to appear before the Trustees of your husband's estate. I am afraid for you. You know they are saying you are mad. If they declare you mad, they will take away control of all your estate, and they may even lock you away. How can they have done this? Is there no end to these sorrows? Really, Xenia, my dearest friend, are you sure you are doing what is right, giving all away?

**Xenia:** Be at peace, Parasceva. I think I may be doing what is truly right for the first time in my life. Uncle Vanya and the family think I am crazy for wanting to give all of my things away. They think this world is all there is, and this governs what they do, as it once did for me. But now I have seen the truth of things. Nothing can be as it was for me. I must repent for the unrepented sins of my husband, as we are one flesh. All I must do is speak to the trustees and surely they will allow me to do what I wish with my husband's estate.

**Porter:** Madam, this way please. The trustees will see you now.  
*(enter legal office)*

**Trustee 1:** Xenia Grigorievna, we are so sorry for your loss. Please be seated. We are, of course, at your service. We have heard, however, of some rather unusual behavior on your part, and the concerns of your family have made it necessary for us to request this meeting.

**Trustee 2:** We must be assured you are not ill from the strain of your husband's death, before any further funds or properties may be dispensed from his estate.

**Xenia:** Gentlemen, thank you for your concern for me. I know that my family is opposed to my actions, but surely I can give what is mine to whom I choose.

**Trustee 1:** Madam, that is most certainly true, as long as, well, forgive me, as long as you are in your right mind. We have a responsibility to protect you by looking after your husband's estate. You have no other means of support, and you are young. You must plan for the future.

**Xenia:** Sir, that is precisely what I am doing. My husband and I lived with no thought of tomorrow, only for the joy of the moment, of the day at hand, never looking toward our deaths when we would be taken from this world to the next, to stand before God. What preparation for the future is that? Are not *these* the actions of one who is mad-to live as if there is no God!

**Trustee 2:** Well, yes, but we must all prepare for the future in caring for ourselves in *this* world. This is the case for every man. Every day a man must eat, have a home to sleep in, and clothing to wear. And you are giving everything away! Have you thought what it will mean to your way of life? How will you live? You must keep enough of your estate to provide for yourself. You may even do many good works with the funds you have. You do not need to go to extremes.

**Xenia:** And how extreme is it for a soul to meet God? I think, sir, that we fool ourselves into doing less than we ought by counting the small things we do as very great. It is not enough not to be a very bad man – we must seek to be very good. Very good indeed! And when one has not had such thoughts before his death, then it is the prayers of those who love him and who love God that can ease the suffering of his soul and draw it out of hell. Is not the danger of a beloved soul being cast into hell, a time for extreme measures?

**Trustee 2:** Calm yourself, madam. I do not wish to grieve you further.

**Trustee 1:** Nor do I. I know your family, and your way of life. You have not been used to work or hardship of any kind. Do not let this incident destroy your way of life. You may waken one day and regret the loss of your jewels and beautiful things.

Poverty may seem romantic and honorable, but, Xenia Grigorievna, we must speak of reality!

**Xenia:** The reality you speak of falls away before the reality of God and the fate of our souls. I see the vanity of all the earthly things in which I had put my trust. What good are pearls or riches? This world is gone in an instant, at any moment, and we hide from that fact through our absorption in the glitter and the fleeting pleasures that seem so real. No, gentlemen, I have not lost my mind. I am giving my estate in its entirety to the poor, in exchange for their prayers for Andrei Theodorovich.

**Trustee 1:** That may be well and good, but what provision do you make for yourself?

**Xenia:** I wish to keep nothing for myself. I have not spoken of this to my family, but I will go to a monastery, and pray for my husband's soul, and all those who are in need. So, you see, I will need nothing. My house will go to my dear friend, Parasceva Antonova, and the rest to those whose need is great. All that I ask is that everyone pray for the soul of my husband. I fear for him, and as we were one flesh, I will dedicate my life to seeking forgiveness for his sins and salvation for his soul.

**Trustee 2:** *(To Trustee 1)* There are no legal grounds to stop her. She is more sane than most people we will ever meet.

**Trustee 1:** That is true, but I still wish she would take a moderate course. Even so, there is nothing of insanity about her. And she gives me much to think of. So, we are agreed?

**Trustee 2:** Yes. *(To Xenia, all stand and shake hands in turn)* Madam, thank you for taking the time to speak with us. Our judgment is that you are indeed quite sane, and your actions are fully legal. We will not hinder you in any way, though we are not courageous enough to follow in your footsteps.

**Trustee 1:** Yours will not be an easy life, but I think it will be one of many blessings. Pray for us as well.

**Xenia:** Thank you, gentlemen. I will pray for you, and please pray for Andrei Theodorovich!

**(Close curtain)**

**Act 2: Scene 1**

*Shop*

**Narrator, Shopkeepers (Misha & Volodya), Coachman, Nina**

**Narrator:** Xenia Grigorievna indeed gave away all of her possessions throughout St. Petersburg, and suddenly vanished for eight years. It is believed that during these years she lived at a hermitage with a sisterhood of holy ascetics, learning about prayer and the spiritual life from an elder. It was during this time that she was called to the highest feat of spiritual endeavor, that of being a fool for Christ's sake, not living according to the reality of this world, but attuned to the reality of heaven itself. When Xenia returned, she clothed herself in one of her late husband's old uniforms and refused to respond to her own name. Answering only to the name of her late husband, Andrei Theodorovich, she labored to somehow take upon herself the burden of his unrepented sins and his death without the Holy Mysteries. Sorrowing for her own sins and for his, she began her long pilgrimage of wandering through the streets of the poorest districts of St. Petersburg. She was most often found near the parish of Saint Matthias, where the people lived in shabby huts.

**Misha:** I tell you, that old woman is crazy. Andrei Theodorovich, she says! That's no name for a woman. A woman dressed like a soldier, wandering our streets day and night? Don't we have enough poor people here already?

**Coachman:** She may be crazy enough, but don't you remember back when the Russian Colonel fell dead at the ball and his wife gave all her riches away? That man was Andrei Theodorovich! We were asked to pray for him and I have been, for whatever good it has done. It is his widow to be sure, who is walking our streets.

**Volodya:** I remember now! The poor woman. First a widow, and now mad. What has happened to her family and friends? They should be able to keep her fed and clothed! If they won't, at least I can give her something better than that old army jacket to wear. (*Exits with clothing over his arm*)

**Coachman:** How could her family help her? She won't even answer to her own name. Her husband's name is the only one she responds to. Someone called after her yesterday, "Xenia, Xenia Grigorievna!" It was just like they weren't talking to her at all. Maybe she wouldn't recognize her family if she saw them.

**Nina:** Oh, don't you be fooled. She may be crazy to our way of thinking, but I heard her muttering – and it was not gibberish. She was saying prayers just like in church, and if you look into her eyes...well, you'll know then that she knows just what is going on. Makes no sense to me, but then, I don't suppose it has to.

**Misha:** You're right there, Nina. Nobody has to ask *our* permission. And sad enough it is. I guess I can spare a loaf of bread for one more beggar. She was noble enough once, but she is one of us now.

**Volodya** (*enters*): Well! I never met a poor person like that! She would not take the warm clothes I had for her. Just kept pointing to another old woman, like I should give the things to her.

**Misha:** So did you?

**Volodya:** Well, the odd thing is that I did! She patted me on the arm, and I felt like God smiled on me. Don't laugh. There is something about her that makes you feel good.

**Coachman:** I know what you mean. Yesterday, I saw those street ruffians saluting to her and bowing, marching right along with her as she walked slowly along. Laughing right in her face,

and calling her crazy, and worse things, too. She never changed the look in her eye, or her pace as she walked. She nodded to them at the corner as if they were nice as can be. Left them confused! They just walked away.

**Nina:** I know those ones. They will not stop there. They take pleasure in tormenting anyone that catches their eye. No conscience at all in those fellows.

**Misha:** And they just walked away? I think Andrei Theodorovich, if that's what she wants to call herself, could be good for this neighborhood after all. Anyone who can stop those boys from their mischief is good enough for me.

**(close curtain)**

## Act 2: Scene 2

*Shop*

**Narrator, Misha, Volodya, Coachman, Nina, Petrov**

**Coachman:** You seem to be in a good mood today!

**Volodya:** And well I should. Ever since Xenia, I mean Andrei Theodorovich, has come to our neighborhood, good things keep happening. You remember the day I offered her clothing and she had me give it to someone else? My business has not been the same. Since I offered her those clothes my business has nearly doubled.

**Misha:** I have seen this, too. On days that she will take the bread I offer her, all my bread sells—much more than usual! And did you hear? Nina asked her to pray for her sister to find work. After her husband died, she could find nothing, and this week she has a new position!

**Nina:** It is true! A good job that will take care of them all!

**Coachman:** At last God has blessed us with a favored one of His!

**Petrov:** (*enters*) Blessings, you speak of? So is God now pouring blessings on our miserable corner of St. Petersburg, our shacks and my hungry children? Misha, will you buy our old clock? What use is there for us to know the time? It is always the same time – time to eat, for the hunger never ends.

**Misha:** Petrov, your clock does not even work! And neither do you! Can you not find a job to support your family?

**Petrov:** And if I could, would I be here? I am not a lazy man, but when there is no work, there is nothing to be done.

**Coachman:** Nothing to be done? Petrov, ask Xenia for help! Why should she help others and not you?

**Petrov:** Xenia? You mean the crazy woman? I thought her name was Andrei. Why would I ask a crazy wandering woman for help?

**Volodya:** Because she is crazy for God, and He listens to her. I gave her clothing, and my business doubled!

**Misha:** The days she eats my bread, I sell all I can bake!

**Coachman:** And we coachmen compete with each other, asking her to take a ride, even to sit in our wagons for a little rest, and when she does, we get fares all that day like we never see!

**Nina:** Petrov, when I asked her to pray for my sister, you know Nina, work came for her within a few days!

**Petrov:** So we have a blessed one in our midst? Well, what if she is crazy! Who am I to say who God will listen to? Work is what I need, and I am willing to be helped. Where does she live?

**Volodya:** She does not have a home, but she walks all through the neighborhood.

**Misha:** No one knows where she sleeps at night, but surely if you are seeking her, you will find her.

**Petrov:** That phrase sounds familiar enough! “Seek and ye shall find....” It did not help me to find work then, but maybe with her help...yes, I will ask her to help us.

**(close curtain)**

## Act 2: Scene 3

*Shop*

**Narrator, Misha, Petrov, Volodya, Nina**

**Narrator:** So it was with God-pleasing Xenia. As years passed, the people of the Borough of St. Matthias began to recognize the treasure they had in their midst. To evil people, and the street urchins, this strangely dressed, scarcely shod woman was only a simple-minded beggar whom they often persecuted and laughed at. She meekly bore it all, forgiving them in the spirit of the last earthly prayer of our Lord, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"

As the people began to know her as one touched by God, even though her ways were strange and the meaning of her words was often hard to understand, they began to invite her into their homes and offer her alms and warm clothing for the severe St. Petersburg winters. She would never accept the clothing and took only the small copper pennies, which were called *the king on horseback* because there was a horseman (actually, St. George) struck on them.

**Misha:** Petrov! I have not seen you in weeks. Is that a new coat?

**Petrov:** A new coat and a new man! I thank you more than I can tell for sending me to our blessed one, Xenia.

**Volodya:** Tell us what happened, my friend.

**Petrov:** All I can say is that after I spoke to her, she looked at me with such kindness, and took my hand. She came with me and held my daughter, who has never been very well, and touched all the children. She asked me to pray for Andrei Theodorovich and I did and she gave me a coin. And now a job has come that I would never have dreamed of, and the children are strong and well. I can hardly believe it.

**Nina:** (*Crosses herself*) Gospodie pomeloi!

**Volodya:** (*slaps him on the back*) Believe it! God works among us by her prayers!

**Petrov:** Yes, and I am living proof.

**Misha:** You and I and many of us. Who would think that in this poor section of St. Petersburg one blessed by God would live. Sometimes the things she says make no sense at all. And where does she sleep? Who can live outside in these hard Russian winters? No one knows where she goes.

**Nina:** We know so little about her, but she seems to know so much about us. God blesses us with her presence! (*goes to door*) Look! She is coming! And I need to go home. Perhaps she will have a word for me. (*Exit Nina*)

**Volodya:** Quite a nice coat, Petrov! A pity you did not buy it from me! (*all laugh*)

**(Close curtain)**

**Act 2:** Scene 4

*Street*

**Xenia, A young Mother, Nina, Firemen 1,2,3**

*(Xenia enters. A mother is onstage with a baby.)*

**Mother:** Andrei Theodorovich, will you hold my little one. She has a fever and has been so ill. I have been so afraid for her.

**Xenia:** *(Rocks the baby, humming.) (Enter Nina)*

**Nina:** Good afternoon, Andrei Theodorovich.

**Xenia:** *(Nods, gives baby back to mother and speaks to her.)*  
Pray for Andrei Theodorovich. All is in God's hands.

**Mother:** Thank you, thank you so much. I will pray.

**Xenia:** *(Sees Nina and comes over, hands her a coin.)* Hmm. Take this five kopeck piece. Here is the king on horseback. You see him? The king on horseback. It will be extinguished. I must hurry. I am needed there. *(Xenia nods and hurries off)*

**Nina:** *(walking the other way)* Thank you, Andrei Theodorovich! *(to herself)* The king on horseback? What could she have meant? Well, St. George is on these kopecks, but what a funny way to talk about these smallest of coins. Ah, here is my street, so I will go home and... *(open curtain on other half of stage)* WHAT IS THIS! A fire! Whose house, no, oh no, it is mine! *(Nina hurries up, men with buckets putting out fire.)*

**Firemen 1:** More water! Keep the buckets coming!

**Nina:** My house! My house!

**Fireman 2:** Nothing to worry about now, matushka. It is nearly out.

**Nina:** What has happened! My house!

**Fireman 1:** So it's your house we are saving? We were passing by here and saw smoke coming from your windows!

**Fireman 2:** If we had been a few minutes later, your whole house would have burned to the ground. But, as it was, it did not take us long to get it under control.

**Nina:** Burned to the ground! But now...

**Fireman 2:** Calm yourself, matushka. Now it is extinguished.

**Nina:** (*looking at the coin*) "It will be extinguished. It will be extinguished." That is what she meant!

**Fireman 2:** Matushka, it is extinguished. Didn't you hear me?

**Nina:** (*Crosses herself*) Gospodie Pomeloi! It will be extinguished! Thank you, blessed Xenia Grigorievna!

**(close curtain)**

## Act 2: Scene 5

*Parlor*

**Parasceva Antonova, Xenia, “cat”**

**Parasceva:** (*sitting by the fire and sewing*) And you, cat by the fire, at least I have your company today. I am stitching and you are purring. Another day goes by. (*Knock, she rises to answer it.*) Andrei Theodorovich!

**Xenia:** Yes, Parasceva Antonova, here is all of me!

**Parasceva:** What a blessing to see you. Come in and sit. I was just sewing, but I'll get us some tea.

**Xenia:** (*irritably, shaking her head*) Tea! Here you are sitting and sewing buttons and you don't know that God has given you a son! Go at once to the Smolensk Cemetery!

**Parasceva:** A son! Smolensk Cemetery! (*Jumps up*) I shall go right away! (*Rushes out*)

**(Close curtain)**

**Act 2: Scene 6**

*Street by Smolensk Cemetery*

**Policeman, coachman, Parasceva Antonova, man, woman, woman on the ground**

**Parasceva:** What a strange thing! She sends me out like this to the cemetery! I know she is a blessed one. But what can all this mean? To the cemetery for a son? It may seem crazy to rush off like this, but I know it is crazier not to do whatever she says. I have seen that truly enough! Oh! What has happened?  
*(Policeman kneeling by woman on the ground)*

**Man:** An accident! That coachman just ran down a pregnant woman. It looks bad.

**Coachman:** Oh, I never meant to hurt a soul. She just stepped out without looking! I tried to draw the horses off, but still she was knocked down.

**Woman:** *(holding baby in blanket)* Run down by a coachman, the poor thing, and now her baby is born in the street, and she is dead!

**Coachman:** Dead! No! She must have just...

**Policeman:** *(Stands)* She is dead. *(Lays his coat over her.)* Your name, sir. And the name of this woman.

**Coachman:** My name? But I didn't mean to... And I never saw her before.

**Policeman:** Does anyone know this woman?

*(Everyone on stage shakes head or shrugs to the effect of answering the question "no")*

**Man:** No. Never saw her before.

**Woman:** She is not from this neighborhood. She is dressed like a stranger.

**Policeman:** Does she have a bag with her? Maybe there is some identification.

**Parasceva:** Here is a small handbag, officer. Perhaps it is hers.

**Policeman:** (*Takes bag, looks through it.*) Only a few rubles, no letters or anything that would identify her.

**Parasceva:** The poor woman. (*Turning to the baby*) And you, poor little thing.

**Policeman:** We must find out who she is. But the investigation may take some time.

**Woman:** You will take your time, but this baby needs to be fed now. And I can do no more. Matushka, you take him. I have my own to take care of and I have been away too long already.

**Parasceva:** (*taking the baby*) Officer, I am Parasceva Antonova. I can care for him until we find his relatives. Surely someone knows this woman. She is well dressed. They will be alarmed when she does not return home!

**Policeman:** (*writing down her name*) I am sure we will find them in a few days. What a sad case. They will certainly thank you for your kindness to this little one.

**Parasceva:** It will be my joy to take care of him until his father and family are found. Poor motherless child! I will do what I can to be a mother to you. Poor sweet son. SON! God has given me a son! Xenia! This is surely what you meant! Oh, Xenia! A Son! Even for a short while, to be a mother is a dream come true! Thank you, blessed Xenia!

**(Close curtain)**

**Narrator:** All the efforts of the St. Petersburg police to discover the identity of the mother or locate the father or relatives of the tiny orphan proved in vain, and so the child remained with Parasceva Antonova. She gave him a good upbringing and a sound education, loving him as her own son. Eventually the boy became a respectable businessman and lovingly cared for his foster mother in her old age. He also truly revered the memory of the Servant of God, Xenia who had shown much kindness to his foster mother and who had taken such a hand in his own fate.

**Act 2:** Scene 7

*Shop*

**Misha, Volodya, Xenia, man, woman**

**Misha:** I tell you, I was lucky to get it! Honey of this quality is not to be had every day!

**Volodya:** We have not had any since I can remember. Let me have a taste.

**Misha:** Friend though you are, I spent so much for it, I must sell every drop, and it will not be cheap! (*woman enters*) I have fresh honey! Of the first quality! Only one barrel!

**Woman:** Honey! What a treat it will be! Yes, give me a jar full. What is the cost?

**Misha:** Well, honey of this quality will be a little expensive, but honey...(*man enters*)

**Man:** Did you say honey? I have been searching for it! None of the stores have any these days. Give me a container of it! My wife loves honey.

**Misha:** Of course, sir. We have honey enough for the both of you. Right now my barrel is full, but this will go fast! (*Hands over the jars*) (*Enter Xenia*)

**Xenia:** Don't take it! Don't take it!

**Woman:** What ever do you mean? There is enough for you, too!

**Xenia:** Don't take it! This honey can't be eaten!

**Man:** I'll say it can! I've never smelled such lovely honey. I want a second jar!

**Xenia:** No! It can not be eaten! It stinks of a corpse!

**Misha:** Mother, please, you have always helped my business before. Please, this is expensive honey. Let them buy it....

**Xenia:** No, it stinks of a corpse! (*She shoves the barrel over.*)

**Man:** Get out of the way! She should be arrested! Are you mad?

**Volodya:** Quick, maybe we can set it up again and save some. Wait. What is this? (*Pulls dead rat out of barrel.*)

**Misha:** What! Let me see! Oh, no! A rat! A dead rat!

**Woman:** (*screams*) A dead rat in the honey! We might all have been poisoned!

**Man:** It would have meant prison and disgrace for you, man! Thank God for this crazy woman!

**Misha:** When I think of what might have happened! Andrei Theodorovitch, how can I thank you? You have saved all our lives, and my business!

**(Close curtain)**

## Act 2: Scene 8

*Mrs. Golubev's parlor (having tea)*

**Mrs. Golubev, her daughter, Xenia, Parasceva, Mrs. Krapivina**

**Mrs. Golubev:** Parasceva, how is your son? I saw him near the academy last week, and he looked like such a nice fellow.

**Parasceva:** Mrs. Golubev, he is the joy of my heart! I can hardly believe it has been 15 years since Xenia Grigorievna sent me racing to the cemetery, telling me God was sending me a son! I never imagined I would have a son!

**Mrs. Golubev:** My sweet daughter was only two years old when it all happened. Night after night I could not sleep, thinking of how horrible it must have been!

**Mrs. Krapivina:** And to think his family was never found. What would have happened to him if you had not taken him in and cared for him over all these years!

**Parasceva:** Mrs. Krapivina, it makes me shudder just to think of it. There are so many evil people in the world. I thank God that Xenia sent me to him.

**Daughter:** He is so fortunate to have you! Being raised in a religious household, under the watchful eye of Xenia Grigorievna herself! Mother says she comes to see you often.

**Parasceva:** That she does, and I am grateful for it. She is always so loving and cheerful. She never speaks of all that she does, but she wears herself out helping people, praying all night and doing so many hard things. She has been so good to me. I am doubly glad when she comes and stays for tea.

**Mrs. Golubev:** I had hoped she would join us today, and perhaps she will yet. You know, the chief of police was talking with my husband about her. He said they had conducted an

investigation to determine where she lived. You know, they don't like people being unaccounted for. Even the poorest have some corner they go to and call home.

**Mrs. Krapivina:** Well, when Xenia comes to visit and says "here is all of me!" in that cheerful voice of hers, she means it. She has nothing else. Not another pair of shoes, a scarf or a crust of bread! I can't imagine they found a secret home!

**Mrs. Golubev:** Indeed, they did not! They found night after night, she stood in an open field, with her arms stretched up to heaven, praying! All night! She only changed positions to face all four directions, and to do prostration after prostration!

**Parasceva:** No wonder God speaks to her! It is a miracle, a real miracle, that she survives!

**Mrs. Golubev:** One night they could not find her in the field. I am sure they thought they'd find some secret. But soon they saw her in a wet muddy area. She stood in freezing water up to her knees, praying again with arms outstretched!

**Mrs. Krapivina:** Oh, it breaks my heart to hear how she tortures herself. Her life calls to mind the holy martyrs who were starved and tortured by the Romans. Only she does it to herself. She is not young! How can she do it? Even from those of us she calls friends, she will take little enough.

**Parasceva:** That is true. Even when she does come to tea, she never eats more than a few crumbs. Sometimes she will only touch the cake, and eats none at all! But sometimes she will sit in a soft chair for a little while. It is never for long. She often gets that faraway look in her eyes, and abruptly says, "I must hurry! I am needed there!" And off she goes, rain or snow, to help someone only she knows about.

*(KNOCK ON DOOR)*

**Mrs. Golubev:** *(Rises, goes to the door.)*

**Xenia:** Here is all of me, my friend!

**Mrs. Golubev:** *(kisses both cheeks)* Andrei Theodorovich has come to tea!

**Parasceva:** How wonderful to see you! *(kisses both cheeks)*

**Mrs. Krapivina:** Come sit by me. There is just room, and I have been missing you.

*(Xenia goes to the daughter and lovingly strokes her face and kisses both cheeks, then goes to sit down, kisses both cheeks of Mrs. K.)*

**Xenia:** *(Smiling as she looks at each one.)* Blini! We will all be making blini. You must save your flour.

**Mrs. Golubev:** We will save it, Andrei Theodorovich, but will you tell us why? It is nearly Christmas, and there is much baking to do.

**Xenia:** All of Russia will be making blini!

**Daughter:** Then we will surely make blini. But for now I will make you a little coffee!

**Xenia:** My beauty! Here you are making coffee, and your husband is burying his wife in Okhta. Run there quickly!

**Daughter:** My what? I don't have a husband...and burying his wife!" What do you...

**Xenia:** *(Stands up.)* Go! Go now!

**Mrs. Golubev:** Come, my daughter. Neither you nor I know why, but we shall do just what the blessed one has told us. She never does anything without a reason. Let us go, now!

**Daughter:** Of course! I am sorry...

**Xenia: Go!**

**(Close curtain)**

## Act 2: Scene 9

*Okhta Cemetery*

**Mrs. Golubev, Daughter, woman, mourners, doctor,  
Narrator**

**Daughter:** Mother, it looks like a funeral procession.

**Mrs. Golubev:** We shall go with them. *(To mourner.)* Who has died?

**Woman:** It is the young wife of our doctor. She died in childbirth. Both she and the child are gone.

**Mrs. Golubev:** *(Crosses herself)* Gospodie Pomeloi.

**Woman:** He has lost all he loved in one hour! And he, a doctor, could not save them!

**Mrs. Golubev:** We do not know him, but we will pray for their souls, and for him.

**(Close curtain.)**

**Narrator:** The Liturgy was celebrated, then the funeral service, after which the Golubevs followed as the coffin was carried to the grave. The funeral had ended and the people began to leave; however, they chanced upon the sobbing young widower.

*(Open curtain) (cemetery with grave mound, Golubevs behind him.)*

**Doctor:** *(weeping)* My darling, my darling I tried to save you. I would give anything...oh, how can I bear this. I want you back! I can't bear it! *(weeping, then passes out and falls on ground near Golubevs. They rush to him.)*

**Mrs. Golubev:** Quickly, hold his head up, and loosen his collar.

**Daughter:** *(lifts his head to her lap)* Oh Mother, will he be all right? The poor man has had such a shock!

**Mrs. Golubev:** (*Hand on his heart*) His heart is beating solidly. I think he will recover in a moment. (*slapping his wrists*)

**Daughter:** (*stroking his brow*) His poor sad face is covered with tears. (*gently she wipes them*) Dear Heavenly King, you have taken those most dear to him, give him something to live for, some ease of his pain of heart, and the strength to bear what You in Your wisdom have allowed him to suffer. Help him to find Your grace and mercy in this and in all things. Amen. (*during this prayer he opens his eyes.*)

**Doctor:** (*sitting up*) I beg your pardon, Miss. But what just happened? Who are you?

**Mrs. Golubev:** You fell into a swoon, sir, and we were nearby, and sought to revive you. Are you feeling better?

**Doctor:** I do not think I shall collapse again, (*Stands up with help*) but I cannot think I shall ever feel better after this day. I thank you for your kindness. I should be going. (*staggers.*)

**Mrs. Golubev:** I do not think you are quite yourself yet. Let us take you home. We have a carriage here, and we will be most happy to help you in whatever way we can.

**Doctor:** Thank you. I had planned to walk, but I do not feel quite able. (*They take his arms.*)

**Mrs. Golubev:** We will escort you home, and make certain that you have something to eat. Perhaps we can call on you again, in case there is some other way we might assist you.

**Doctor:** Thank you, yes, thank you. (*to daughter*) And thank you for your prayer. I heard a little as I awoke. (*Shaking his head.*) How can I bear it?

**Daughter:** May our all-loving God help you to find the way, sir.

**(close curtain)**

**Act 2:** Scene 10

*Mrs. Krapivina's parlor, (having tea)*

**Mrs. Golubev, her daughter, Xenia, Parasceva, Mrs. Krapivina, Narrator**

**Mrs. Krapivina:** And so now the young doctor has proposed to your daughter!

**Xenia:** Your husband was burying his wife, my beauty! *(with a smile)*

**Mrs. Golubev:** Yes, but truly, we were only moved in our hearts to help the poor man. We did not think about what you said, Andrei Theodorovich, until the moment he proposed!

**Daughter:** It was as if it had been erased from my mind! Then all of a sudden, I remembered your words that day.

**Mrs. Krapivina:** And the blini! You told us about the blini. Indeed all of Russia was making blini to honor the Empress Elizabeth Petrovna at her death on that Christmas day!

**Xenia:** God gives a word of wisdom or warning. Andrei Theodorovich repeats what she must. The wise hear and understand, or wait and discover. I am needed elsewhere now. *(Rises)*

**Mrs. Krapivina:** Thank you for joining us, Andrei Theodorovich. Thank you for everything.

**Xenia:** I am thanking you, my friend. *(Kisses her, then turning to the others)* Here is green nettle, green krapiva, but soon it will be wilted. Goodbye. *(exits)*

**Parasceva:** I am glad she sat with us for a while today. How sweet she was when she kissed you, Mrs. Krapivina!

**Mrs. Golubev:** Indeed she was. But what is this about green nettle? Was she making a little joke about your name, Krapivina, and nettle, krapiva? Or that you are so much younger than we are?

**Mrs. Krapivina:** Her words are beyond us all. She told us what to do! Wait and see!

**(Close curtain)**

**Narrator:** Whether or not Mrs. Krapivina came to understand Xenia Grigorievna's words is not known for certain, but the other guests did not attach any special significance to them. Much to everyone's amazement, though, Mrs. Krapivina, who was still young and in good health, suddenly became ill and died. Only then did the guests understand that the words, "*Here is green krapiva, green nettle, but soon it will be wilted,*" foretold the death of Mrs. Krapivina.

## Act 2: Scene 11

### *Smolensk Cemetery*

#### **Workmen (Vladimir, Alexi, Pavlov), Xenia, Narrator**

**Vladimir:** I tell you it happened again! Every day I lay brick after brick, building this new church in the cemetery. I go home exhausted, but I have laid all the bricks at hand. Then I come in the morning, and another huge pile is waiting for me high up on the scaffold!

**Pavlov:** You, too, Vladimir? Every day there are all the bricks I will need, and in just the right place!

**Alexi:** (*laughs*) So, you think it is a problem that someone is doing your work for you?

**Vladimir:** It is not natural, Alexi! Think of it! Who would be so crazy as to bring all these bricks up here for free? There is little enough work to be had for a wage. But to do it for free?

**Pavlov:** It doesn't make sense. How can they can carry so many bricks up so high on the scaffolding in one night? How many of them must there be?

**Vladimir:** I don't know how many there are, Pavlov, but I say what does not make sense, is not right. And what is not right, happening every day, makes me nervous.

**Alexi:** So are you afraid it is the wicked one? Vladimir, we are building a church! I can't think he would help us do that! He'd be more liable to throw all our hard work down to the ground if he was able.

**Vladimir:** That makes sense. I had not thought of that. But someone is doing it, and I will find out who this tireless worker is. Wait with me after work, into the night. Let us see who it is.

**Pavlov:** I cannot. My wife is ill, and I must go home.

**Alexi:** I say let the good do their deeds in peace. I want to sleep tonight.

**Vladimir:** Alexi, you will stay with me. Who could be doing it? We need to know. We are responsible for the work that goes on here. We should be aware of what is happening.

**Alexi:** All right, all right. I will stay, too. Maybe the bricks will fly through the air by themselves! And if not, we will know who to thank!

**(Close curtain)**

**Narrator:** And so the workmen waited, hidden. Not far away was a huge stack of bricks. The night grew darker.

**(Open curtain)**

**Alexi:** If the moon stays hidden, we will not be able to see whether anyone comes or not!

**Vladimir:** How will they work in the dark? They must have a torch. But wait, the clouds are moving off, and the moon will shine after all.

**Alexi:** Good. I would hate to stay out here on watch for nothing. My bed is calling my name. I can hear it.  
“Alexi...Alexi...”

**Vladimir:** Quiet! I heard something.

**Alexi:** Yes, someone is coming. Is there only one? (*Xenia enters, carries bricks*)

**Vladimir:** Only one, and not very large at that, but he is picking up several bricks and heading for the ladders.

**Alexi:** Ah, the moon at last. Vladimir, it looks like a little old woman! How could she do all that work every night? There must be others. Look around!

**Vladimir:** No one else is here, Alexi. Can you see who it is? I can't see tell.

**Alexi:** Vladimir, this is that blessed one, Andrei Theodorovich, who walks about the streets of St. Petersburg like a madwoman, but heals the children and helps many. Now she is helping us!

**Vladimir:** Yes, that is who it is. She has been here in St. Petersburg for nearly 40 years, and I have only seen her a few times.

**Alexi:** That is because of your unbelief. Many people see her often, and she works miracles. This is another one, I think. How could she have the strength to do in one night what it takes several workmen to do during the daylight?

**Vladimir:** She is a small, old woman. And yet she has such strength. It does not make sense, but now I see that this is different. Unbelief, you say? I have never thought God made much sense. Who would create all of us and let us behave so badly! It does not make sense!

**Alexi:** If you would talk with a priest once in a while, you might understand a few things. God does not have to make sense to us. We should have our lives make sense in His sight. If this old woman has the strength of several men to help build a church, then God who gave life to us all, is giving her strength beyond understanding.

**Vladimir:** The way you say it, it makes sense not to understand everything.

**Alexi:** Now you are getting it. Maybe it was worth staying up tonight, if it helps you a little. This blessed one will help us build the church, and the church will be blessed by her hand every step of the way.

**Vladimir:** And what about our hands?

**Alexi:** Any time you build a church, you receive a blessing. I think we get a double helping this time, for helping the blessed one to build this one!

**(Close curtain)**

## Act 2: Scene 12

**Narrator:** Near the end of the eighteenth century, after 45 years of taking care of the city of St. Petersburg, there came a day when Xenia could not be found. She was not in the streets, nor did she visit those she called friends. She was neither in church nor in the fields praying fervently. No details about her death are available, but she now lies buried in the Smolensk Cemetery, where she spent so much time, close to the church she helped to build. Later, a chapel was built over her grave.

Those who loved her during her lifetime continued to ask for her help after her death. She did not disappoint them. Many, many miracles have been recorded, and are continuing even to this day. She has appeared to those in need who did not even know about her!

Let us, like all who venerated and loved her, all who benefited from her presence in St. Petersburg go to her grave and follow the instructions she herself left, and which are written upon her gravestone:

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT. HERE RESTS THE BODY OF THE SERVANT-OF-GOD XENIA GRIGORIEVNA, WIFE OF THE IMPERIAL CHORISTER, COLONEL ANDREI THEODOROVICH PETROV. WIDOWED AT THE AGE OF 26, A PILGRIM FOR 45 YEARS, SHE LIVED A TOTAL OF 71 YEARS. SHE WAS KNOWN BY THE NAME OF ANDREI THEODOROVICH. MAY WHOEVER KNEW ME PRAY FOR MY SOUL, THAT HIS OWN MAY BE SAVED. AMEN. †

*(Open curtain, whole cast on stage, and sings)*

**All:** Holy Saint Xenia, pray to God for us!

*The End*