

SYDNEY
THEATRE
CO

Born to privilege,
bound for revolution

SYMBOLS IN CHILDREN OF THE SUN

Symbols provide clues to the Dramatic Meaning of a play. They can be found in objects, visuals, language and design.

Liza becomes upset about their disregard for wasting food while people go hungry. Liza's character is attuned to the chaos and violence about to occur in the town.

THE WOODS

Both Liza and Pavel make reference to the Protosov home as being situated in a clearing in a wood that is otherwise a dark and scary place. This is symbolic of the family being in a position of privilege as they are protected from the increasingly violent townspeople and the poison which has made them all sick. Protosov describes the wood as being airless and rotten, rather like outdated Imperial Russia.

A BROKEN WORLD

Both the inside and outside worlds of the play are broken. Set in 1860, the traditional structures of Russian society were beginning to disintegrate. In the world of the play, chemicals from Pavel's experiments have leaked into the water supply and made the townspeople sick, creating a world of panic and chaos. Inside the Protosov household, the characters and their relationships become destroyed beyond repair. Pavel and Yelena's marriage is broken; while Liza's fearful rants similarly portray her mental state as broken. At the end of the play, the outside flats of the set are dismantled by the characters, symbolising society crumbling and breaking.

THE SUN

The sun is a symbol of purpose, intellect and enlightenment. Throughout *Children of the Sun* characters make many references to the sun. Pavel and his wife Yelena both speak of journeying towards the sun symbolizing their yearning to achieve a purpose for themselves and society. Pavel's chemical experiments will enlighten the scientific world and pioneer a new way of thinking. The title *Children of the Sun* is a reference to the intellectual elite in Russia at the time.

EGGS

Eggs are a symbol of new life. Pavel requests Melaniya to bring him 10 fresh eggs everyday to use in his experiment. Eggs in the play are a poignant choice as class, economic and intellectual boundaries were being broken down as Russia was on the brink of revolution. It is telling that Nanny will only give Pavel stale eggs, as she is a symbol of the archaic social hierarchy which existed in Russia. When the characters begin playfully smashing the eggs,



SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY AND COLONIAL FIRST STATE GLOBAL ASSET MANAGEMENT PRESENT

CHILDREN OF THE SUN

BY MAXIM GORKY
IN A NEW VERSION BY ANDREW UPTON

8 SEP – 25 OCT 2014
DRAMA THEATRE, SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

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A FAMILY OF LOVEABLE ECCENTRICS IN A
COUNTRY ON THE BRINK OF CHANGE

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