Reading Guide for “Only Daughter” by Sandra Cisneros

Pages 814-819

1. At the end of the first paragraph, Cisneros writes, “I am the only daughter in a family of six sons. *That* explains everything.”
   1. How does *that* explain everything? What does this line mean?
2. What words does she add to her description in the next paragraph? What effect does each word have in each new description?
   1. \_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. \_\_\_\_\_\_
   3. \_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What does her status as an only daughter help her become?
   1. How did she feel about it?
   2. How does she feel about it now?
4. The following paragraph (lines 25-29) focuses on parental expectations and personal expectations.
   1. What does the contrast reveal about both Sandra and her father?
5. Still lines 25-29: Look carefully at the adjectives (describing words, like silly) she uses to describe her interests. Select a few words and explain what effect they have on explaining her connection with her father.
6. Lines 30-33. What does she want?
7. Lines 32-33: Again, word choice is important here. What is the single word on which she focuses?
   1. What power does this little difference in vocabulary have on her?
8. What is the purpose of the next paragraph?
   1. What details does she include?
   2. What is she trying to say about her father?
9. Lines 46-58: What impression do you get about her father from these paragraphs? Prove it with specific details.
10. Line 59: What is odd about this line compared to everything else she has been saying?
    1. Why do you think she added it?
11. Does the following paragraph (62-68) change your mind about her father at all? Why or why not?
12. Lines 75-89: The tone here shifts and Cisneros starts using more imagery.
    1. Write down two solid descriptions.
    2. Explain the contrast between the lines 75-79 and lines 86-89.
       1. What does this contrast suggest?
13. 89-End: Why is that so great to her?
    1. Do you really think it is great? Explain.
14. What seems to be Cisneros’ purpose for writing this essay? What could be her message?