The Big Five (Plus One)

When reading or writing a story, here are some questions you may want to consider in evaluating the piece.

1. Whose story is it?  
   (Can you easily identify the protagonist?)
2. What is the story about?  
   (What is the plot/theme of the story?)
3. What is the prize/what is at stake?  
   (What does the protagonist want?)
4. Why should we care?  
   (How do we identify with the protagonist?)
5. What is the Major Dramatic Question (MDQ)?  
   (Will the protagonist reach his or her goal?)

Plus One
What makes today different for the protagonist than any other day?

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CAST: Joe; 42, a small man with a big heart
           Suzy; Joe’s 14 year old daughter, eager to spend time with her friends.

TIME: 4:00 on a sunny autumn afternoon.

PLACE: The kitchen of the apartment where Joe and Suzy live. It is small, and the
       furniture barely fits, but it is neat.

AT RISE: Joe and Suzy are seated at a kitchen table. Suzy has her head in her hands,
          with her elbows on the table. Joe is slowly drinking a cup of tea.

          (Lights Up)

SUZY: (lifting her head out of her hands, looks at Joe) But Dad, why can’t I go? All my
       friends will be there.

JOE: (sighs, sets his cup down) We’ve gone over this more times than I care to count.

SUZY: But everybody is bungee jumping off the science building!

JOE: I’m not, and I’m part of “everybody”, so you may want to rethink that statement
     young lady.

SUZY: (conceding) Okay, not everybody, but most of my friends will do it.

JOE: My guess is that most of your friends are having the same conversation with their
     parents as we are right now.

SUZY: (sighs) You’re such a “DAD”!

JOE: And you’re such a “teenager”. (pauses and smiles) You are so much like your
     mother.

SUZY: (quietly) I miss her.

JOE: I do too, Honey. Maybe that is why I am so protective. Can we pass on the
     dangerous stuff for now?

SUZY: (giving in) Okay, Dad. (pauses) By the way, did I tell you about the (smiles)
     white water rafting trip?

JOE: Oh, no, not again!

          (Lights Down)