



STORY SYNOPSIS

Act I:

Evan Hansen is a lonely, friendless high school senior, with a broken arm, whose yearning for connection is tempered only by his incapacitating fear of rejection. In a bid to strengthen Evan's confidence, his therapist has assigned him to write daily, affirmational letters addressed to himself – “Dear Evan Hansen” – and Evan attempts to compose one on the morning of his first day of school. In the letter, Evan coaches himself on how to be more self-assured and personable, and finally gather the courage to speak to his crush, Zoe Murphy.

Interrupting his letter-writing, Evan's mother, Heidi, comes to check in on him. Clearly concerned about her son and his evident lack of friends, she suggests he ask his classmates to sign his cast on this, his first day of school. Meanwhile, at the Murphy household, Larry, a successful corporate lawyer, and his wife Cynthia try to cajole their volatile and troubled son – and Zoe's older brother – Connor into going to school (“Anybody Have a Map?”).

At school, Evan is approached by Alana, an overly-eager straight-A classmate flaunting her summer internships, and the swaggering Jared, who covers his own insecurities by bragging about his supposed summer camp romantic conquests. Jared asks Evan how he broke his arm. Evan tells him the story: over the summer, working as an apprentice park ranger, he climbed a tree one day, and promptly fell. Lying there on the forest floor, Evan says, he waited in vain for someone to come help him up – but no one ever did.

As per his mother's advice, Evan awkwardly attempts to enlist both Alana and Jared to sign his cast – Alana is too self-absorbed even to register the question, while Jared downright refuses, insisting that Evan and he are merely *family* friends.

When Jared turns his snark on Connor, Evan laughs, clearly uncomfortable. Connor mistakenly assumes Evan is laughing at him and shoves him to the ground. Zoe approaches Evan and apologizes for her brother's behavior. Evan tries to make conversation with her, but quickly gives up. After this string of social failures, Evan gives voice to his profound desire to be visible, to connect, and to belong – and his pessimism that he will ever be able to escape the disabling fear that keeps him from doing so (“Waving Through a Window”).

Heidi calls Evan and tells him that she won't make it home tonight since she had to pick up another shift at her nursing job. Evan lies and tells her that he had a great first day of school. He finishes writing the self-affirming letter he began that morning – but he now finds himself unable to sugarcoat the truth. He pours out his anguished sense of isolation, and his certainty that nothing will ever change. His only hope, he writes, is Zoe, who doesn't have any idea who he is. He wonders if anyone would even notice if he disappeared (“Waving Through a Window (Reprise)”). Connor finds Evan in the computer lab, printing the letter to take to his therapist. In a brief moment of connection – they are fellow loners – Connor signs Evan's cast. He grabs Evan's letter for him from the printer. When he sees his sister's name in the letter, though, Connor misunderstands, imagining that Evan wrote the letter and planted it for Connor to find, in order to humiliate him. In a rage, Connor storms off with it.

When Connor fails to come to school over the next several days, Evan turns to Jared for advice, fearing the worst. Jared confirms Evan's fears that Connor must be planning some means of ruining Evan's life with the embarrassing letter. Meanwhile, Alana reveals her own loneliness (“Waving Through a Window (Reprise #2)”).

The next morning, Evan is called to the principal's office, where Larry and Cynthia Murphy tell him that Connor has taken his own life. They found Evan's letter in his pocket, and have erroneously assumed that it is Connor's suicide note, a note which he evidently addressed to Evan – “Dear Evan Hansen.” Evan tries to tell them the truth but is overtaken by shock and panic. It's then that Cynthia notices Connor's name on Evan's cast, which she takes as definitive proof that they were indeed the close friends the letter seems to suggest they were.

Later that night, conversing with Jared, Evan shares what happened. Evan has been invited for dinner at the Murphys' home. Jared insists to Evan that it would be devastating to the Murphys to reveal the truth about the letter, and encourages him instead not to contradict the grief-stricken parents' assumption that their otherwise isolated son had at least one close friend in whom to confide.

At dinner with the Murphys, unable to bear Cynthia's anguish, and desperate to offer her some kind of solace, Evan ends up elaborating on the misperception that he and Connor were friends. He says that he and Connor would email back and forth from secret email addresses and tells them of the day they climbed trees together at an abandoned apple orchard. It was from one such tree that Evan fell and broke his arm, he claims. As he recounts the supposed true story, Evan slips into a fantasy re-imagining of the accident – one in which he experiences the warmth of a close friend who was there to pick him up when he fell: their son Connor (“For Forever”). The Murphys are stunned by Evan's story, in particular Cynthia, who expresses her immense gratitude for his sharing it. Zoe is unsure of how to process the alternate portrait of her brother that Evan presents to her.

Later, Heidi comes into Evan's room to show him some college scholarship contests she found online. She reminds him that paying for college will be a struggle, and they can use any help they can get. She offers to cancel her work shift the following week to help him brainstorm essay topics and make his favorite dinner. He enthusiastically agrees.

Evan and Jared write a series of fake emails between Evan and Connor, imagining their fictitious friendship (“Sincerely Me”).

After reading the emails, Cynthia has begun to reassess Connor, amazed to find in them the kind, sensitive side of her son she'd always imagined had disappeared when her little boy grew up. Zoe, though, is unconvinced. She is tired of pretending to grieve her brother, whose unpredictable mood swings and behavior were often terrifying to his younger sister, and whose treatment of her was often unkind, if not downright cruel. Larry, who has yet to grapple fully with the loss of his son, struggles with his anger toward Connor for squandering the endless second chances he was given. (“Requiem”).

Later, Alana chats online with Evan, confirming that rumors of his secret friendship with Connor have begun to spread. Though she was never herself friends with him during his life, Alana has become fixated on him upon his death, as has much of the student body at school. Heidi comes to tell Evan that she is leaving for work – and realizes that she'd completely forgotten that tonight was the night she had promised to set aside for the scholarship essay conversation. Evan hides his hurt, says it's no problem at all.

Later, Evan goes to the Murphys' for dinner. Zoe finds Evan in Connor's bedroom. She asks about Connor's note, wondering why Connor wrote that his only hope was Zoe. Evan, seeing her desperation to find some shred of good in her brother, tells Zoe that Connor always regretted that he and his sister weren't closer. Evan goes on to list all of the many things that Connor supposedly wanted to tell her, but felt unable to. The truth, of course, is that these are the things *Evan* has always wanted to tell her. (“If I

Could Tell Her”). Swept up in the emotion of the moment, Zoe leans in close to Evan. In a colossal misunderstanding, Evan leans in to kiss her. Appalled, Zoe stops him. Evan leaves, feeling awful.

Two weeks after his death, Alana warns Evan that the school community has begun to forget Connor and move on. Evan imagines a conversation with Connor, who urges Evan to keep his story alive, and not allow his memory to vanish. (“Disappear”). Evan, in response, creates a student group called “The Connor Project” to commemorate Connor, and Alana and Jared both become involved – each of them finding their own sense of belonging through their participation in the group.

Evan, terrified of public speaking, nevertheless reluctantly agrees to talk about his supposed best friend, Connor, at the group’s kickoff assembly after Cynthia conveys to him how meaningful it would be to the whole Murphy family. When his speech goes awry, Evan finds himself on the verge of a panic attack, but is able to collect himself and continue. To his – and everyone else’s – astonishment, the speech goes viral. The Murphys are overwhelmed by the extraordinary response to Evan’s speech, and the way in which it catapults their late son to sudden, and widespread, public attention. Jared and Alana are amazed by the outpouring. Heidi is baffled by everything she sees. Evan, for his part, feels excruciating internal conflict as he watches the story explode from the confines of his community into the larger world online. Zoe, flooded with gratitude for Evan allowing her to see a side of her brother she somehow missed, kisses him (“You Will Be Found”).

Act 2:

On behalf of The Connor Project, Alana and Evan – no longer wearing a cast, and having gained newfound acceptance in his high school community in the wake of his viral speech – launch an online campaign to raise \$50,000 to reopen the abandoned apple orchard as a memorial to Connor. Jared and Evan fabricate more emails (“Sincerely Me (Reprise)”).

Heidi comes home and confronts Evan, after seeing his speech online. She questions why she didn’t know about his friendship with Connor, and wonders what else Evan has kept from her. They argue, before Evan, declining to tell his mother the truth, excuses himself, claiming to be going to Jared’s house.

Instead, he goes to the Murphys’. In an attempt to connect with Evan, Larry offers him an old unused baseball glove that he bought for Connor. Larry shares his tips on breaking it in – and the advice that he wishes Connor had taken about the value of perseverance. Evan tells Larry about his fractured relationship with his own, almost entirely absent, father. (“To Break in a Glove”).

Another night, when Heidi is working, Zoe comes over and tells Evan she wants their relationship to be about the two of them, not Connor (“Only Us”).

Focused exclusively on his relationship with Zoe, Evan begins to neglect his responsibilities to The Connor Project, arousing Alana’s annoyance, and blows off Jared.

Days later, Evan goes to the Murphys’ to discover they have invited Heidi for dinner. Larry and Cynthia offer to give Evan the funds they set aside for Connor’s college education. Heidi, mortified, demurs. As Evan and Heidi return home, she excoriates him for all of the many things he has evidently chosen to keep from her, and the many lies he has told her. Separately, Jared and Alana list their own mounting grievances against Evan (“Good for You”).

Evan, feeling unable to bear the pressure any longer, imagines another conversation with Connor, in which he expresses his determination to tell the truth and be done with it. But Connor pushes back and reminds Evan of all he stands to lose. (“For Forever (Reprise)”).

Alana, at her wit’s end with Evan, insinuates that perhaps he made up the story of his friendship with Connor. Feeling desperate and cornered, with his carefully constructed world beginning to unravel, Evan offers Alana Connor’s “suicide note” as indisputable evidence of their relationship. She instantly posts it online, to Evan’s horror. The note goes viral, and the world online begins to turn against the Murphys, blaming them for Connor’s suicide (“You Will Be Found (Reprise)”).

The Murphy family begins to fracture, trading blame for Connor’s death. Evan, sick with guilt, and unwilling to watch the family fall apart, finally tells the truth. Cynthia, Larry, and Zoe are aghast – and heartbroken. Evan is left alone to contemplate his lies and the depth of his self-loathing (“Words Fail”).

Evan returns home. Heidi has seen Connor's note online, instantly recognizing it as one of the assignments from Evan's therapist. Evan implies to his mother that falling from the tree was not an accident. She comforts Evan, promising that she will always be there for him, regardless of the circumstances ("So Big / So Small").

A year later, Evan and Zoe meet at the once-abandoned orchard, which, in the year since, has been fully restored in Connor's memory. Evan is working at Pottery Barn to save up money for college and Zoe is finishing her senior year. Zoe shares how much the orchard has meant to her parents. Evan apologizes again for all the hurt he caused her and the entire Murphy family. After they part ways, Evan writes another letter, hopeful, perhaps for the first time, about the future ("Finale").

(courtesy STAGE AGENT)