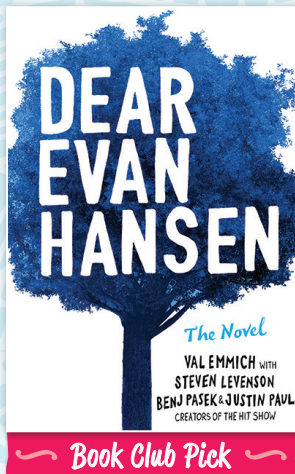


DEAR EVAN HANSEN *The Novel*

by Val Emmich, Steven Levenson, Benj Pasek, and Justin Paul



**DEAR EVAN HANSEN,
TODAY'S GOING TO BE AN AMAZING DAY AND HERE'S WHY...**

When a letter that was never meant to be seen draws high school senior Evan Hansen into a family's grief over the loss of their son, Evan is given the chance of a lifetime: to belong. He just has to pretend that the notoriously troubled Connor Murphy was his secret best friend.

Suddenly, Evan isn't invisible anymore—even to the girl of his dreams. And Connor Murphy's parents have taken him in like he's their own, desperate to know more about their enigmatic son from his "closest friend." As Evan gets pulled deeper into the family's swirl of anger, regret, and confusion, he knows that what he's doing can't be right, but if he's helping people, how wrong can it be?

No longer incapacitated by anxiety or hiding from the disappointment in his mother's eyes, this new Evan has a purpose. And confidence. Every day is amazing. Until everything is in danger of unraveling and he comes face-to-face with his greatest obstacle: himself.

A simple lie leads to complicated truths in this bighearted story of grief, authenticity, and the struggle to belong in an age of instant connectivity and profound isolation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. From the first chapter, Evan presents his struggle with "the true me" (p. 8). But that struggle isn't unique to Evan. How does each character struggle with being true to himself or herself?
2. Were you angry with Evan for not telling the truth about the letter? Are there benefits to perpetuating the lie?
3. How does Evan's rambling inner monologue change over the course of the novel? How does it reflect his mental state?
4. The writing in this novel is from the first person perspective, both from Evan's point of view and from Connor's. How does this narrative technique impact the story? How does it make it more relatable? Does it make you wish you could hear other characters' inner monologues as well? Why is it important that we don't get to?
5. Social media is an integral part of our daily lives, but it plays an especially major role in this story. Is social media really social, or does it further disconnect characters? In what ways does it positively impact the characters? How does it have a negative effect?
6. How is Zoe's grief over Connor's death and her mourning process different than the rest of her family's? How does she process her mixed emotions and complicated relationship with her brother?
7. "What I do know for sure is that these people all seem to have a desperate desire to connect with someone. They feel inspired to share their incredibly personal stories" (p. 262). Why do people respond to The Connor Project when they don't know any of the people involved? Why does it become a phenomenon? Can you think of a real-life example of something similar?
8. Evan has complicated relationships with everyone, from his mother to his classmates, but what does that say about relationships in general? Aren't all relationships complicated? How does Evan realize this, and why is that realization important?
9. Why do simple lies sometimes spiral out of control? Why do people who tell lies believe that lying is often less damaging than the truth? What kind of relief comes with telling the truth, even if the truth is painful?
10. Heidi tells Evan, "No parent knows what their kid is really up to. . . . We're all just doing the best we can" (p. 374). Why does Heidi tell Evan this? How does this statement extend beyond parenthood?
11. What kind of resolution is reached at the end? Why is it important that everything isn't neatly resolved?
12. Why is this novel so important? How do you see it helping people connect with others?
13. If you've seen a performance of the *Dear Evan Hansen* musical, how does this novel expand on the story from the show? How does the music affect the story?
14. Today is going to be an amazing day. Why?