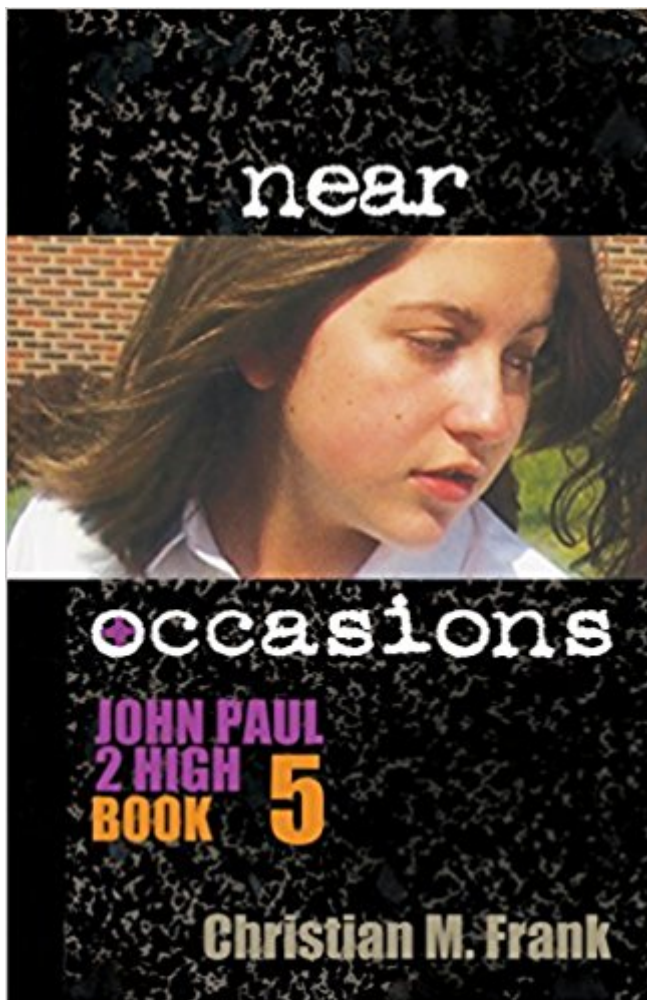


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# Near Occasions



## Synopsis

Liz & J.P. just wanna have fun, running a prank war and staying cooler than the school. But danger is near, and actions have consequences.

## Book Information

Paperback: 274 pages

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

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## Customer Reviews

Good teen book. Appreciate how it handles difficult subjects while being respectful of all. There was a bit of a cliffhanger at the end with the suggestion that book 6 addresses it but there does not seem to be a book 6. It was sad to see one friendship left unresolved, but there is a lot of realism in that. The book offers insights to all about Christianity and some differences among Christians, specifically Catholic compared to Protestant. It also highlights the different ways people, especially adults, embrace and live their faith which is such a healthy reminder that there is not ever one specific path. It had action in the book as well. Hoping that book 6 will publish soon.

Christian M. Frank did it again!! This book did not disappoint, for any fans of this series you will enjoy Book #5. And if you're new, I highly recommend this series! They're all entertaining, interesting books, and it's a relief to buy a book for a sibling or friend without worrying about trashy material.

Although the saga of the Sparrow Hills shooter is over, this book creates a set up for book six. I also think Liz and J.P are every relatable characters.

We love the entire series. This is a great parent/teen bonding tool. :)

My teenage daughter was skeptical when I bought the first book in the series but couldn't put it down!

This book follows on the heels of the previous books, picking up shortly after book four leaves off. (It's the fifth in a series, so if you're just here browsing - check out the first one, "Catholic, Reluctantly.") "Near Occasions" centers around JP and Liz, the two school troublemakers, who are a bit less... committed... to their faith, and a bit more concerned with social popularity, than their peers. Overall it's a very fun read - as with the others, it balances real teenage / high school concerns with the mystery/drama/danger of the "unknown shooter" plot that started in book one. At times Liz and JP both can get annoying as protagonists - as they're both quite self-centered - but their real struggles with feeling ignored and unloved, and their frequent (nearly daily, it seems) struggles with doing what is right, give this book a realism that brought me back to my high school years. The book has a bit of a slow start: JP and Liz start the new school year with normal teenage concerns... such as romance, the school's social hierarchy, pranks, parental relationships, and so on. But overall there's a lot more explicit moral ambiguity (and straight-up making bad choices) in this book than in the previous books, which makes things unpredictable and quite interesting. The protagonists' internal conflicts are paralleled by the school's principal, Mr. Costain, delivering lectures on the four types of love (affection, friendship, romance, and agape, or unconditional love). The Catholicism of this book comes namely through in these lectures and the subsequent attempts of JP and Liz to understand how these loves function in their own life. There's also, as usual, the characters trying to understand what's right and wrong; and a particularly shining moment for JP comes during a conversation with one of the series' new characters when they discuss high school hookup culture. Externally, JP and Liz both end up in conflict with the other JP II High students, including their friends. Due to their desires both to fit in and to rebel, they go between trying to do what's right, and doing what they want, and not being quite sure what they should do. They're both impetuous and they definitely don't always make the right choices, which leads to a LOT of trouble. A lot of the conflict in this book is brought about by the choices Liz and JP make and the things they say, and there are consequences for them and for other people - big ones. The internal and external conflicts are well-integrated, so the plot moves along very naturally. Overall, the book runs basically 3 parallel plots that slowly come together: JP cluelessly trying to fit in with the public high school's

football team; Liz trying to fit in with cheerleaders and getting math tutoring; and both of them causing tensions to go up at JP2 High due to their inability to fit in to the more serious, devout atmosphere of the school. Of course, continuing the overarching plot arc, the two meet new people and uncover information about the mysterious school shooter, who has been in action since the first book in the series. All these plotlines, as well as Mr. Costain's teaching on the fourth love, agape, converge in a dramatic way at the end of the book, leading to major cliffhangers in multiple plot areas (!). Overall, highly recommended for fans of the series. There's lots of plot movement in this book, and significant character development for three of characters. (I'll leave the 3rd character to be a surprise!) Finally, the book's targeted toward middle and older teens -- sex, drugs, assault, vengeance (including extreme anger), and murder are topics in this book, although there's no sexual content.

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