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The Bridge of San Luis Rey

Thornton Wilder · *1927 · original English text*

On Friday noon, July the twentieth, 1714, the finest bridge in all Peru broke and precipitated five travellers into the gulf below. The Bridge of San Luis Rey is Wilder's complete 1927 novel, now in the public domain in the United States, a inquiry into why those five were on the bridge.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

Why were these five on the finest bridge in Peru when it broke, and can a later inquiry tell accident from intention, or only learn how to love the living?

"ON Friday noon, July the twentieth, 1714, the finest bridge in all Peru broke and precipitated five travellers into the gulf below."

Part One, Perhaps an Accident, the opening

The hosted text is The Bridge of San Luis Rey (1927, PG #69768), complete in five parts, public domain in the United States since January 1, 2023. The opening is exact, including "ON Friday noon" and "precipitated five travellers into the gulf below." Brother Juniper's inquiry, and the lives of the Marquesa, Esteban, and Uncle Pio, are the book. For a wide older band. A short Christian meditation on love and loss; teach it as Wilder wrote it. Quote this typography.

KEY CHARACTERS

the five travellers
The company precipitated into the gulf when the finest bridge in all Peru broke, on Friday noon, July the twentieth, 1714.

Brother Juniper
The Franciscan who would inquire whether the fall was accident or intention.

the Marquesa de Montemayor
The subject of Part Two, whose letters and whose love are part of the inquiry.

Esteban, and Uncle Pio
The subjects of Parts Three and Four, whose lives meet the same bridge.

THE FINEST BRIDGE IN ALL PERU

> *"ON Friday noon, July the twentieth, 1714, the finest bridge in all Peru broke and precipitated five travellers into the gulf below."*
>
> Part One

Grades 9–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

The Finest Bridge in All Peru

PART ONE, PERHAPS AN ACCIDENT

On Friday noon, July the twentieth, 1714, the finest bridge in all Peru broke and precipitated five travellers into the gulf below. The book begins with a fall, and with a question: accident, or intention?

- The opening is exact in both witnesses, including 'ON Friday noon.'
- The five are the subject, not a crowd only.
- For a wide older band.

> *"ON Friday noon, July the twentieth, 1714, the finest bridge in all Peru broke and precipitated five travellers into the gulf below."*
>
> Part One

02

Three Lives

PARTS TWO, THREE, AND FOUR

The Marquesa de Montemayor, Esteban, and Uncle Pio are given their own parts. The inquiry is a set of lives, not a single riddle with one key. Keep the three distinct, and keep their loves in view.

- Map all three lives, not the fall only.
- Teach the attachments as Wilder wrote them.
- A wide older band can read this with help.

03

Perhaps an Intention

PART FIVE, AND THE CLOSE

Brother Juniper's book, and the later close, return to the question of the opening. The last movement is about love as well as about proof. Teach the close as written.

- Do not flatten the close into a mere sermon, or into mere chance.
- The five parts are complete in this file.
- Cite this typography.

04

A Complete 1927 Novel

THE HOSTED FILE

PG #69768 and the site EPUB are this complete book, now PD in the United States. Quote stretches that appear in both, from the tale itself.

- Complete in five parts.
- For a wide older band.
- The opening typography is 'ON Friday noon.'

Accident, or Intention | Five Lives | A Bridge Broken | Love and Loss | An Inquiry

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 9–12

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2. Brother Juniper's inquiry, and the lives of the Marquesa, Esteban, and Uncle Pio, are the book. For a wide older band. A short Christian meditation on love and loss; teach it as Wilder wrote it.
3. Quote stretches that appear in both the Gutenberg text and the site EPUB.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text, Project Gutenberg #69768, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/the-bridge-of-san-luis-rey/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.