

HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN

Key of D minor

HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN

Words and Music by unknown, Arranged by Ric Douglas

Dm A Dm A

A Dm F G A#Maj7

There is a house in New Orleans

Fadd2 Dm F A

they call the Rising Sun.

Dm F G A#Maj7

And it's been the ruin of many a poor boy,

Fadd2 Dm A Dm A

and God I know I'm one.

Dm F G A#Maj7

My mother was a tailor,

Fadd2 Dm F A

she sewed my new blue jeans.

Dm F G A#Maj7

My father was a gambling man,

Fadd2 Dm A Dm A

down in New Orleans.

Dm F G A#Maj7

Now the only thing a gambler needs

Fadd2 Dm F A

is a suitcase and a trunk.

Dm F G A#Maj7

And the only time he'll be satisfied

Fadd2 Dm A Dm A

is when he's all a drunk.

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Dm F G A#Maj7

Oh mother tell your children,

Fadd2 Dm F A

not to do what I have done.

Dm F G A#Maj7

Spend your lives in sin and misery

Fadd2 Dm A Dm A

in the house of the Rising Sun.

Dm F G A#Maj7

Well I got one foot on the platform

Fadd2 Dm F A

the other foot's on the train.

Dm F G A#Maj7

I'm goin back to New Orleans

Fadd2 Dm A Dm A

to wear that ball and chain.

Dm F G A#Maj7

Well there is a house in New Orleans

Fadd2 Dm F A

they call the Rising Sun

Dm F G A#Maj7

And it's been the ruin of many a poor boy,

Fadd2 Dm A Dm

and God I know I'm one.

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"**The House of the Rising Sun**" is a folk song from the United States. Also called "**House of the Rising Sun**" or occasionally "**Rising Sun Blues**", it tells of a life gone wrong in New Orleans. Depending on the version, the song may be sung from the perspective of a woman or a man. Two of the best-known renditions of the song are by the English group The Animals in 1964, which was a number one hit in both the United States and United Kingdom, and by Joan Baez in 1959-60.

Like many classic folk ballads, the authorship of "The House of the Rising Sun" is uncertain. Musicologists say that it is based on the tradition of broadside ballads such as the *Unfortunate Rake* of the 18th century which were taken to America by early settlers. Many of these had the theme of "if only" and after a period of evolution, they emerge as American songs like the *Streets of Laredo*. The tradition of the blues combined with these in which the telling of a sad story has a therapeutic effect.

The oldest known existing recording is by versatile Smoky Mountain artists Clarence "Tom" Ashley and Gwen Foster and was made in 1933. Ashley said he had learned it from his grandfather, Enoch Ashley. Texas Alexander's *The Risin' Sun*, which was recorded in 1928, is sometimes mentioned as the first recording, but this is a completely different song. The Callahan Brothers recorded the song in 1934.

Various places in New Orleans, Louisiana have been proposed as the inspiration for the song, with varying plausibility. The phrase "House of the Rising Sun" is often understood as a euphemism for a brothel, but it is not known whether or not the house described in the lyrics was an actual or fictitious place. One theory speculated it is about a daughter who killed her father who was an alcoholic gambler who had beaten his wife. Therefore, the House of the Rising Sun may be a jail-house, from where you are the first person to see the sun rise. Because the song was often sung by women, another theory is that the House of the Rising Sun was where prostitutes were detained while they were treated for syphilis. Since cures with mercury were ineffective, going back was very likely.