

Jerry Douglas

"The Ballad Of Frankie Lee And Judas Priest"

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Well, Frankie Lee and Judas Priest
They were the best of friends
So when Frankie Lee needed money one day
Judas quickly pulled out a roll of tens
And placed them on a footstool
Just above the plotted plain
Sayin', "Take your pick, Frankie Boy
My loss will be your gain"

Well, Frankie Lee, he sat right down
And put his fingers to his chin
But with the cold eyes of Judas on him
His head began to spin
"Would ya please not stare at me like that," he said
"It's just my foolish pride
But sometimes a man must be alone
And this is no place to hide"

Well, Judas, he just winked and said
"All right, I'll leave you here
But you'd better hurry up and choose
Which of those bills you want
Before they all disappear"
"I'm gonna start my pickin' right now
Just tell me where you'll be"

Judas pointed down the road
And said, "Eternity"
"Eternity?" said Frankie Lee
With a voice as cold as ice
"That's right," said Judas Priest, "Eternity
Though you might call it 'Paradise'"

"I don't call it anything"
Said Frankie Lee with a smile
"All right," said Judas Priest
"I'll see you after a while"

Well, Frankie Lee, he sat back down
Feelin' low and mean
When just then a passing stranger

Burst upon the scene
Saying, "Are you Frankie Lee, the gambler
Whose father is deceased?
Well, if you are
There's a fellow callin' you down the road
And they say his name is Priest"

"Oh, yes, he is my friend"
Said Frankie Lee in fright
"I do recall him very well
In fact, he just left my sight"
"Yes, that's the one," said the stranger
As quiet as a mouse
"Well, my message is, he's down the road
Stranded in a house"

Well, Frankie Lee, he panicked
He dropped ev'rything and ran
Until he came up to the spot
Where Judas Priest did stand
"What kind of house is this," he said
"Where I have come to roam?"
"It's not a house," said Judas Priest
"It's not a house . . . it's a home"

Well, Frankie Lee, he trembled
He soon lost all control
Over ev'rything which he had made
While the mission bells did toll
He just stood there staring
At that big house as bright as any sun
With four and twenty windows
And a woman's face in ev'ry one

Well, up the stairs ran Frankie Lee
With a soulful, bounding leap
And, foaming at the mouth
He began to make his midnight creep
For sixteen nights and days he raved
But on the seventeenth he burst
Into the arms of Judas Priest
Which is where he died of thirst

No one tried to say a thing
When they took him out in jest
Except, of course, the little neighbor boy
Who carried him to rest
And he just walked along, alone
With his guilt so well concealed
And muttered underneath his breath
"Nothing is revealed"

Well, the moral of the story
The moral of this song
Is simply that one should never be
Where one does not belong
So when you see your neighbor carryin' somethin'
Help him with his load
And don't go mistaking Paradise
For that home across the road

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