

Gimme Shelter (1969)

The Rolling Stones

LISTEN FOR

- Merry Clayton powerful soul singing
- Blues timbres, updated: distorted harmonica, psychedelic guitar sounds
- Song based around intro riff
- Latin percussion instruments
- Lyrics reflect turbulent social, political climate

CREATION

Songwriters Mick Jagger, Keith Richards

Album Let it Bleed

Label Decca Records/ABKCO

Musicians Mick Jagger (vocals, harmonica) Keith Richards (guitars, backing vocals) Bill Wyman (bass) Charlie Watts (drums) Nicky Hopkins (piano) Jimmy Miller (percussion) Merry Clayton (vocals)

Producer Jimmy Miller

Engineer David Hassinger

Recording Olympic Studios London, England

Charts N/A

MUSIC

Genre Hard rock, blues rock, psychedelic rock, soul

Form Verse chorus

Key C Major

Meter 4/4

LISTENING GUIDE

Time	Form	Lyric Cue	Listen For
0:00	Intro		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keith Richards psychedelic guitar riff
0:08			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drums and bass along with other percussive instruments come in followed by backup vocals A second guitar (also played by Richards) also enters playing melodic riffs over the main rhythm
0:50	Verse 1	"Oh, a storm is threat'ning"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drums and other instruments build to the entering of Mick Jagger's lead vocals Riff and lead licks continue under the vocals Rhythm section stays the same as in the intro
1:07	Chorus	"War, children, it's just a shot away"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merry Clayton joins Mick Jagger with a distant but powerful, soulful presence. Instruments play the same phrase, but a sense of urgency appears
1:30	Verse 2	"Ooh, see the fire is sweepin'"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clayton stays with Jagger as she sings along with him The intensity of the music continues to ramp up building towards something
1:46	Chorus	"War, children, it's just a shot away"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The phrase "War, children, it's just a shot away" is repeated twice before the vocals drop out.
2:03	Instrumental verse		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jagger's distorted harmonica
2:19	Instrumental chorus		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richards' guitar solo begins just as the harmonica cuts out.
2:43	Bridge	"Rape, murder!"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merry Clayton belting it out over top of the basic form. Listen for Clayton's voice to crack on the final phrase, followed by Mick Jagger cheering. This is a very iconic moment in music.
3:15	Verse 3	"The flood is threatn'ing"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The harmonica plays fills during lyrical breaks.
3:31	Chorus	"War, children, it's just a shot away"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A more intensified tone than in the previous choruses
3:46	Outro	"I tell you love, sister, it's just a kiss away"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This phrase is repeated as the song fades out

LYRICS

Oh, a storm is threat'ning
 My very life today
 If I don't get some shelter
 Oh yeah, I'm gonna fade away

War, children, it's just a shot away
 It's just a shot away
 War, children, it's just a shot away
 It's just a shot away

Ooh, see the fire is sweepin'
 Our very street today
 Burns like a red coal carpet
 Mad bull lost its way

War, children, it's just a shot away
 It's just a shot away
 War, children, it's just a shot away
 It's just a shot away

Rape, murder!
 It's just a shot away
 It's just a shot away

Rape, murder yeah!
 It's just a shot away
 It's just a shot away

Rape, murder!
 It's just a shot away
 It's just a shot away yeah

The floods is threat'ning
 My very life today

Gimme, gimme shelter
 Or I'm gonna fade away

War, children, it's just a shot away
 It's just a shot away

War, children, it's just a shot away
 It's just a shot away

It's just a shot away
 It's just a shot away

It's just a shot away, shot away, shot away
 It's just a shot away

It's just a shot away

It's just a shot away, shot away, shot away

I tell you love, sister, it's just a kiss away

I tell you love, sister, it's just a kiss away

It's just a kiss away

It's just a kiss away

It's just a kiss away

It's just a kiss away, kiss away, kiss away

It's just a kiss away

It's just a kiss away

It's just a kiss away, kiss away, kiss away,

kiss away, kiss away

Gimme shelter

Gimme shelter

Gimme shelter

Gimme shelter

Gimme shelter

Gimme shelter

Gimme shelter

SOURCES

- <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/rollingstones/gimmeshelter.html>