

## **Marty Robbins**

### **"Mr. Shorty"**

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Nobody knew where he came from  
They only knew he came in  
Slowly he walked to the end of the bar  
And he ordered up one slug of gin.

Well, I could see that he wasn't a large man  
I could tell that he wasn't too tall  
I judged him to be 'bout five-foot three  
And his voice was a soft Texas drawl.

Said he was needin' some wages  
'Fore he could ride for the west  
Said he could do most all kind of work  
Said he could ride with the best.

But there in his blue eyes was sadness  
That comes from the need of a friend  
And tho' he tried, he still couldn't hide  
The loneliness there, deep within.

Said he would work thru the winter  
For thirty a month and his board  
I started to say where he might land a job  
When a fella came in thru the door.

And I could tell he was lookin' for trouble  
From the way that he came stompin' in  
He told me to leave "Shorty" there by himself  
Come down and wait on a man.

The eyes of the little man narrowed  
The smile disappeared from his face  
Gone was the friendliness that I had seen  
And a wild look of hate took its' place.

But the big one continued to mock him  
And he told me that I'd better go  
Find him a couple of glasses of milk  
Then maybe Shorty would grow.

When the little man spoke, there was stillness  
He made sure that everyone heard

Slowly he stepped away from the bar  
And I still remember these words:

Oh! it's plain that you're lookin' for trouble  
Trouble's what I try to shun  
If that's what you want, then that's what you'll get  
'Cause cowboy, we're both packin' guns.

His hand was already positioned  
Feet wide apart on the floor  
I hadn't noticed but there on his hip  
Was a short-barreled bad Forty-Four.

It was plain he was ready and waitin'  
He leaned a bit forward and said  
When you call me Shorty, say Mister, my friend  
Maybe you'd rather be dead.

In the room was a terrible silence  
As the big one stepped out on the floor  
All drinkin' stopped and the tick of the clock  
Said death would wait ten seconds more.

He cursed once or twice in a whisper  
And he said with a snarl on his lips  
Nobody's Mister to me, little man!  
And he grabbed for the gun on his hips.

But the little man's hands was like lightning  
The bad Forty-Four was the same  
The Forty-Four spoke and it sent lead and smoke  
And seventeen inches of flame.

For the big one had never cleared leather  
Beaten before he could start  
A little round hole had appeared on his shirt  
The bullet went clear thru his heart.

The little man stood there a moment  
Then holstered the bad Forty-Four  
It's always this way so I never stay  
Slowly he walked out the door.

Nobody knew where he came from  
They won't forget he came by  
They won't forget how a Forty-Four gun  
One night made the difference in size.

As for me, I'll remember the sadness  
Shown in the eyes of the man  
If we meet someday, you can bet I would say

That it's me, Mr. Shorty, your friend.

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