

Was Brutus a Patriot or a Traitor?

- **Case for “Patriot”**
 - **Love for Rome over friendship**
 - ◆ Quote: **“Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more.”**
 - ◆ Sees assassination as a duty to save the Republic from possible tyranny.
 - **Clean, controlled killing, not cruelty**
 - ◆ Quote: **“Let us be sacrificers, not butchers.”**
 - ◆ Wants a single, “noble” strike, not bloodshed or mutilation.
 - **No hunger for power**
 - ◆ Never asks for the crown himself.
 - ◆ Refuses to kill Antony, avoids making the plot too “bloody.”
 - ◆ Offers himself to public judgment in the funeral speech.
 - **Honest self-judgment and enemy’s praise**
 - ◆ Before death: **“I killed not thee with half so good a will.”** (admits moral struggle).
 - ◆ Antony: **“This was the noblest Roman of them all.”**
 - ◆ Antony says only Brutus acted for “the common good to all,” not out of envy.
- **Case for “Traitor”**
 - **Betrayal of friendship and trust**
 - ◆ Caesar’s shock: **“Et tu, Brute? – then fall, Caesar.”**
 - ◆ Brutus becomes the **“most unkindest cut of all.”**
 - ◆ Seen as a traitor to a loyal friend and to the sitting ruler.
 - **Weak proof of Caesar’s ambition**
 - ◆ Brutus fears what Caesar might become, not what he is.
 - ◆ Soliloquy metaphor: **“And therefore think him as a serpent’s egg...”**
 - ◆ Kills based on hypothetical future tyranny.
 - ◆ Antony reminds crowd Caesar **“thrice refused”** the crown, undercutting Brutus’s logic.
 - **Political naivety that destroys Rome**
 - ◆ Lets Antony speak at the funeral, trusting Antony’s promise.
 - ◆ Underestimates Antony’s oratory and the mood of the crowd.
 - ◆ Result: mob violence, burning of houses, and civil war.
 - **Conspiracy and regicide**
 - ◆ Joins a secret plot, stabs Caesar in the Senate.
 - ◆ Act = treason against the state’s leader, regardless of motive.
 - ◆ Method is morally and politically unacceptable.

- **Balanced Verdict**

- “Brutus is a patriot by intention and a traitor by consequence.”

- **Avoid**

- Do not state Caesar was definitely a tyrant; the text keeps it doubtful.
- Do not ignore consequences: Rome burns because of Brutus's choices.
- Do not reduce Brutus to a pure villain; Antony's final praise must be considered.