

Silence is Betrayal

When retelling history, the most evil of people are ultimately not the people who the battle was fought against. The worst people are those who betrayed their own friends. Benedict Arnold, during the Revolutionary War, had risen to the rank of general in the American Continental Army. He committed treason against the Army by giving American intelligence to the British. Another infamous betrayer was Judas Iscariot, who gave up his friend with a kiss. Judas was one of Jesus of Nazareth's 12 disciples, and in the end gave him up for 30 silver coins. Betrayers are remembered over millennia, they end up as the villains in Shakespearean plays. The ultimate example is General Marcus Brutus. *Julius Caesar* depicted the friendship ending in betrayal of Brutus and Caesar. As Brutus stands silently by during his friend's assassination, Caesar turns to him and says "Et tu, Brute?" These marring words reveal the isolation Caesar felt at the end, as caused by someone whom he had once considered a friend. This quote exemplifies how the silence of a friend, as well as the accompanying cowardice, is more painful than anything our enemies could possibly do hurt us.

The phrase "Et tu, Brute" and its implications stem typically from preventable circumstances. Racism and sexism were, and still are prevalent social concerns people deal with on a daily basis. Ultimately, they are forms of bullying—no different than physically fighting with a classmate or harassing someone online—because it is repetitive in nature. Early education now stresses to students the importance of not being a bystander in a bad situation. Kids are taught to stand up against the bully or to go find someone to diffuse the situation. In their time of need, people find strength in numbers. Speaking up for a friend when they are being bullied will bring new confidence to both individuals. Staying silent could lead to the friend getting hurt, or a friendship being lost. Silence is betrayal. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." Those who stay silent betray their friends. Traitorous acts are remembered to the end.