

Heidi's Dilemma

Read the scenario below. Then follow the directions and complete the chart on the other side of the page.

Heidi is a young Dutch girl who lives in a small house in Amsterdam with her family. She has a best friend named Greta, but lately she has not seen too much of her and when she does see her, Greta is quiet and withdrawn. Heidi wonders if it is because of Germany's new leader, Hitler, and his policies. Greta is Jewish. Heidi has heard the bad things that are being said about the Jews. She does not believe them because she knows Greta is a good person. One day they do manage to talk, and Greta becomes very upset and finally tells Heidi about the awful persecution and ugly abuse that is going on. In fact, one of Greta's uncles has just been arrested for daring to speak out against Hitler. No one knows what has happened to him. Greta has heard stories of Jews being taken away in the night and never being heard from again. Greta and her family are living in fear. Upset and feeling sorry for her friend, Heidi invites Greta home for dinner.

That night after Greta leaves, Heidi tells her family what Greta has said about the ugly things done to Jews, simply because they are Jews. Heidi's parents are aware of Hitler's particular hatred for the Jews, but they believe it is not wise to speak out against the new order. They do not want to put their own family in jeopardy, and so they tell Heidi it would be best not to associate with Greta.

A few hours later, Heidi answers a knock on the door. It is Greta, and she looks terrified with tears streaming down her face. "Heidi, I went home after dinner and my family was gone, but their dinner was still on the table, and there were spots that looked like blood by the door. They have been taken, I know it. What can I do now? I have no place to go. Will you help me?"

Heidi must make a big decision. There is a secret room in the attic where Heidi often goes to be alone. She is afraid for Greta and wants to help her. But she knows her own family's safety will be in danger if she helps her friend. What should Heidi do? Should she take Greta to the secret room? Should she ask her family to help?

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Directions:

1. Think about the difficult choices facing Heidi when her terrified friend, Greta, knocked on the door and asked, "Will you help me?"
2. Put yourself in that time period (early 1940's) and in that place (Nazi occupied Amsterdam in Holland).
3. Imagine that YOU are Heidi and the decision is yours. As with most genuine moral dilemmas, this is a hard choice and with either decision there are serious consequences- short term and long term. Consider your two options (to give Greta sanctuary in your family's secret attic room OR choose not to help her).
4. Complete the chart below with your list of reasons to help Geta AND reasons to deny Greta sanctuary *You must fill out both sides!
5. After you have completed the chart, look at the reasons you came up with on both sides. Then make the ultimate decision of whether you would help Greta or not. Write your decision AND why or why not you chose to help her at the bottom.

Reasons to give Greta sanctuary:	Reasons to deny Greta sanctuary:

What did you decide to do AND why?