

the deal with the devil

the deal with the devil is a recurring motif in folklore, literature, and popular culture that explores themes of temptation, morality, and the consequences of making morally questionable choices. This concept revolves around an individual entering into a pact with a malevolent supernatural entity—often depicted as the devil or a demon—in exchange for some worldly benefit, such as wealth, power, knowledge, or fame. The narrative typically emphasizes the moral dilemma faced by the protagonist, the irreversible nature of their decision, and the eventual price they pay for their bargain. Throughout history, stories of the deal with the devil have served as cautionary tales, philosophical explorations, and dramatic plots, reflecting human fears and aspirations alike.

Origins and Historical Context of the Deal with the Devil

Early Folklore and Mythology

The idea of making a pact with a malevolent being is ancient, appearing in various cultures long before it became a staple in Christian folklore. Some early examples include:

- **The Faust Legend:** One of the most famous stories associated with the deal with the devil, originating in German folklore and later immortalized by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Faust is a scholar who, dissatisfied with his life, makes a pact with Mephistopheles, trading his soul for unlimited knowledge and worldly pleasures.
- **Medieval and Renaissance Europe:** Tales of necromancers, sorcerers, and alchemists who allegedly made deals with demons in exchange for secret knowledge or power.

Religious and Cultural Influences

The Christian doctrine heavily influenced the popular conception of the devil and the concept of evil bargains:

- **Theological Background:** The devil, as a fallen angel, is seen as a tempter and deceiver who seeks to corrupt humans.
- **Biblical References:** While the Bible does not explicitly describe deals with the devil, passages like the temptation of Jesus by Satan and metaphors about selling one's soul underpin the cultural narrative.
- **Witch Trials and Demonology:** During the witch hunts, accusations often involved pacts with the devil, reinforcing the association between the two.

The Structure of the Deal with the Devil

Typical Elements of the Pact

Stories about the deal with the devil often follow a common pattern:

- **The Temptation:** The individual encounters the devil or a demon, often disguised or as a figure of authority.
- **The Offer:** The devil offers something the person desires—wealth, knowledge, youth, etc.
- **The Agreement:** The person agrees to give up something precious, usually their soul, in exchange.

- The Contract: Sometimes formalized through a written or symbolic contract, often containing fine print or loopholes.
- The Consequences: The person faces their fate after the pact, which may involve betrayal, curses, or tragic downfall.

Common Themes and Motifs

- Temptation and Moral Weakness: The individual's desire or weakness leads them to accept the deal.
- The Price of Ambition: The story warns against unchecked ambition or greed.
- Deception and Trickery: The devil often tricks or deceives the individual, emphasizing that bargains may have hidden costs.
- The Unbreakable Contract: Many stories portray the pact as binding, with little chance of escape.
- Redemption and Rescue: Some tales include elements of redemption, where the protagonist manages to outwit the devil or seek salvation.

Famous Literary and Cultural Examples

Literature

- Faust by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: The quintessential story of a man who sells his soul to Mephistopheles for knowledge and pleasure.
- The Devil and Tom Walker by Washington Irving: A story about a man who makes a pact with the devil to acquire wealth, ultimately facing tragic consequences.
- Doctor Faustus by Christopher Marlowe: A tragic play about a scholar who sells his soul for magical powers.

Films and Modern Media

- The Devil's Advocate (1997): Explores themes of temptation and moral compromise within the context of a high-powered law firm.
- Bedazzled (2000): A comedic take on making a deal with the devil for seven wishes.
- Supernatural and Horror Genres: Many movies and TV shows feature deals with the devil as central plot devices, emphasizing horror and moral dilemmas.

Music and Pop Culture

- Songs like "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" by Charlie Daniels highlight the cultural fascination with devilish bargains.
- Characters such as Mephistopheles remain iconic symbols of the devil's cunning and temptation.

Symbolism and Interpretation

Moral and Philosophical Perspectives

The deal with the devil symbolizes various human fears and desires, including:

- Greed and Materialism: The pursuit of wealth at any cost.
- Ambition and Power: The desire for greatness and the willingness to compromise morals.

- Knowledge and Forbidden Wisdom: The allure of forbidden knowledge and the consequences of hubris.
- Moral Dilemmas: The conflict between personal gain and moral integrity.

Psychological Interpretations

Some scholars interpret the motif as a representation of internal struggles:

- The Shadow Self: The darker side of human nature that temptations symbolize.
- Guilt and Conscience: The deal as a metaphor for moral compromise and internal conflict.

The Cultural and Moral Lessons of the Deal with the Devil

Stories involving the deal with the devil serve as powerful moral lessons:

- Warning Against Greed: The pursuit of wealth or power without ethics can lead to destruction.
- Caution Against Temptation: Giving in to temptation can have irreversible consequences.
- The Value of the Soul: Emphasizes the importance of moral integrity over worldly success.
- The Price of Ambition: Highlights that excessive ambition can lead to downfall if moral boundaries are crossed.

Modern Interpretations and Relevance

The Deal with the Devil in Contemporary Society

While literal deals with the devil are mythological, the themes resonate in modern contexts:

- Business and Politics: Compromising ethics for success or power.
- Technology and Innovation: The pursuit of quick gains at the expense of moral considerations.
- Celebrity Culture: The sacrifices made in the pursuit of fame.

Ethical and Philosophical Discourse

Discussions about moral compromises, consent, and the nature of evil often mirror the themes of the deal with the devil:

- Contracts and Morality: Analyzing what constitutes a moral “deal” in real life.
- Corruption and Temptation: Exploring how individuals can be tempted or coerced into unethical actions.

Conclusion

The deal with the devil remains a compelling and enduring motif that captures the complexities of human desire, morality, and the consequences of temptation. Rooted deeply in cultural, religious, and literary traditions, it serves as a metaphor for the moral costs of pursuing worldly gains at the expense of one's integrity. Whether as a cautionary tale, a philosophical allegory, or an intriguing plot device, stories of making a pact with the devil continue to resonate across generations, reminding us of the eternal struggle between good and evil within human nature.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the origin of the phrase 'deal with the devil'?

The phrase originates from folklore, literature, and religious stories where individuals make pacts with malevolent beings, often trading their soul for power, knowledge, or wealth. It has been popularized through stories like Faust and has become a metaphor for risky or morally questionable agreements.

What does 'making a deal with the devil' typically symbolize in literature?

It symbolizes a moral compromise or a dangerous bargain where someone sacrifices their integrity or soul for personal gain, often leading to negative consequences or eternal regret.

Are there any modern examples of 'deals with the devil' in popular culture?

Yes, many. For example, movies like 'The Devil's Advocate' and 'Doctor Faustus,' TV shows, and even music lyrics reference or depict characters making such pacts, often highlighting themes of temptation and moral conflict.

Is there any real historical basis for stories about deals with the devil?

Most stories are allegorical or mythological, but some historical events, like witch trials or accusations of pact-making, reflect societal fears and moral judgments. However, there's no credible evidence that literal deals with supernatural beings occurred.

What are the common terms or conditions associated with 'deals with the devil'?

Typically, these deals involve exchanging one's soul or moral integrity for fame, wealth, power, or knowledge, often with the understanding that the pact has a cost or that the devil will come to claim the bargain at a later time.

Can 'deals with the devil' be considered a metaphor for unethical or risky decisions?

Absolutely. Many interpret the phrase as a metaphor for making morally questionable choices that promise short-term benefits but may lead to long-term harm or regret.

Are there any philosophical debates surrounding the

concept of making a deal with the devil?

Yes, discussions often revolve around morality, free will, and the nature of evil. Philosophers debate whether such bargains reflect true moral choices or are symbolic representations of temptation and human fallibility.

How do different cultures interpret the idea of a 'deal with the devil'?

Interpretations vary: Western stories often depict the devil as a tempter or trickster, while other cultures have similar concepts involving spirits or demons offering bargains, reflecting universal themes of temptation and moral testing.

What lessons can be learned from stories about making deals with the devil?

These stories generally serve as cautionary tales about greed, temptation, and moral integrity, warning individuals to consider the true cost of their desires and the importance of ethical choices.

Has the concept of a 'deal with the devil' been used in modern psychology or self-help literature?

Yes, metaphorically, it is used to describe situations where individuals make compromises or unethical choices for quick gains, highlighting the importance of integrity and the consequences of temptation in personal development.

Additional Resources

The Deal with the Devil: An In-Depth Exploration of a Cultural and Mythological Phenomenon

Introduction

The phrase "deal with the devil" evokes a powerful, often disturbing image—an agreement made in exchange for something desirable, usually at a moral or spiritual cost. This concept has permeated literature, folklore, religious narratives, and popular culture for centuries, serving as both a metaphor for temptation and a cautionary tale about greed, ambition, and moral compromise.

In this article, we will delve into the origins, symbolism, cultural significance, and modern interpretations of the "deal with the devil." By analyzing its historical roots, literary representations, and psychological implications, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of this enduring motif.

Origins and Historical Context

Religious and Mythological Roots

The idea of bargaining with a malevolent supernatural entity predates Christianity, appearing in various cultures across the globe. However, the "deal with the devil" as popularly understood is most closely associated with Christian theology and European folklore.

- **Christian Doctrine:** The concept is heavily influenced by Christian notions of Satan as the adversary who seeks to corrupt human souls. Biblical references, such as the temptation of Christ by Satan in the Gospels, establish Satan as a tempter, capable of offering worldly riches or power in exchange for spiritual allegiance.

- **Medieval Witch Trials and Folklore:** During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, accusations of witchcraft often involved stories of pacts with the devil. These narratives described individuals making agreements with Satan (or his representative) to gain supernatural powers, often in clandestine ceremonies known as "black sabbaths."

- **Faust Legend:** The most iconic story related to the "deal with the devil" is that of Faust, a character who, in various versions, makes a pact with Mephistopheles, a demon, trading his soul for knowledge, power, or pleasure. The legend originated in German folklore and was popularized by Christopher Marlowe's play and Goethe's "Faust."

The Cultural Evolution

Over centuries, the narrative evolved from a literal religious threat to a symbolic exploration of human desires and moral dilemmas. The "deal with the devil" became a metaphor for making morally compromising choices, often involving greed, ambition, or desperation.

Literary and Artistic Representation

The Faustian Archetype

The Faust legend is central to understanding the cultural depiction of the deal with the devil. It embodies themes of:

- **Temptation and Seduction:** The devil offers tempting rewards—knowledge, fame, power—that seem too good to refuse.
- **Moral Compromise:** Faust's pact signifies a turning point where personal integrity is sacrificed for worldly gains.
- **Consequences and Retribution:** The eventual loss or damnation of the soul warns of the peril inherent in such deals.

Key literary works include:

- "Faust" by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: An expansive exploration of human ambition, temptation, and redemption.
- "Doctor Faustus" by Christopher Marlowe: A tragic play highlighting hubris and the peril of overreaching.

Visual and Popular Culture

The motif has been adapted into countless films, TV series, and artworks, often emphasizing:

- The contract or pact as a tangible document or ritual.
- The devil's charismatic yet sinister persona.
- The costs of the deal, frequently involving loss of morality, identity, or salvation.

Notable examples include:

- The film "The Devil's Advocate"
- The comic book and TV series "Lucifer"
- Modern horror stories featuring demonic bargains

Symbolism and Interpretation

The Deal as a Metaphor

While stories often depict literal pacts, the broader symbolism encompasses:

- Temptation and Moral Choice: The deal reflects moments in life where individuals face morally ambiguous decisions.
- Desire for Power and Success: It symbolizes the allure of achieving greatness at any cost.
- Fear of Damnation and Guilt: The underlying anxiety about moral failure and spiritual consequences.

Psychological Dimensions

From a psychological perspective, the "deal with the devil" can be viewed as an allegory for:

- Internal Conflict: The struggle between our higher aspirations and baser instincts.
- Cognitive Dissonance: Justifying morally questionable actions to attain desired outcomes.
- Desperation and Rationalization: Making risky choices when faced with existential threats or overwhelming ambition.

Modern Interpretations and Relevance

Ethical Dilemmas in Contemporary Society

Modern culture often references the "deal with the devil" in contexts such as:

- Business and Politics: Compromising principles for power, wealth, or influence.
- Scientific and Technological Innovation: Ethical trade-offs in pursuing advancements, such as AI or genetic engineering.
- Personal Relationships: Sacrificing integrity or personal values for success or acceptance.

The "Deal" in Popular Culture Today

While literal demonic pacts are rare, the motif persists metaphorically:

- Contractual agreements that are morally ambiguous: For example, high-stakes negotiations or morally questionable business deals.
- Media portrayals: Characters making morally complex choices, often depicted as "selling their soul" for fame or fortune.

The Modern "Devil's Bargain"

In today's context, the "deal with the devil" often refers to:

- Compromising core values for short-term gains.
- Engaging in unethical behavior with the promise of success.
- The allure of quick fixes that might have long-term destructive consequences.

The Cultural and Moral Lessons

The enduring nature of the "deal with the devil" narrative imparts valuable lessons:

- Beware of Temptation: The allure of easy success can mask darker consequences.
- Question the Cost: Material or worldly gains may come at a moral or spiritual expense.
- Recognize the Value of Integrity: True fulfillment often requires moral consistency and patience.

This myth serves as a cautionary tale, reminding us that shortcuts or morally compromised choices can lead to irreversible consequences.

Conclusion

The "deal with the devil" is a complex, multifaceted motif rooted deeply in human culture. From its origins in religious texts and folklore to its literary dramatizations and modern interpretations, it encapsulates universal themes of temptation, moral conflict, and the peril of unchecked ambition.

Whether viewed literally, metaphorically, or psychologically, the concept continues to resonate because it reflects fundamental aspects of human nature—the ongoing struggle between desire and morality. As a cultural symbol, it urges us to consider the true cost of our choices and to remain vigilant against the seductive promises that can lead us astray.

In understanding this enduring myth, we not only appreciate its rich history but also glean

insights into human psychology, societal values, and the importance of moral integrity in navigating the complexities of life.

The Deal With The Devil

the deal with the devil: [A Deal with the Devil](#) Elizabeth O'Roark, 2022-09-07

the deal with the devil: A Deal With the Devil Eden Phillpotts, 2021-06-04 A Deal With the Devil is a tale about a 100 year old man who signed a pact with the devil that gave him ten more years of life in exchange of his soul. The main reason the old man accepted the deal is growing younger in those ten years. Up until then he was being taken care of by his granddaughter and she doesn't give up on him despite the difficulties the deal put them in. In due course of time, his granddaughter assumes the role of his daughter, sister and mother and, at every stage of her life, she tried her best to dissuade her grandpapa from getting engaged or do some other reckless thing because he only has a few years left in which he was growing younger every day.

the deal with the devil: The History of the Devil, Ancient and Modern ... A New Edition Daniel Defoe, 1790

the deal with the devil: *The History of the Devil ...* Daniel Defoe, 1845

the deal with the devil: The Devil on Screen Charles P. Mitchell, 2015-06-08 The Devil has been represented in many film genres, including horror, comedy, the musical, fantasy, satire, drama, and the religious epic, and in these works has assumed many shapes and forms. This book begins with a discussion of how the devil has been portrayed on stage, how that portrayal carried over to the big screen, and what are the standard elements of a satanic plot. Each entry in the filmography includes year of production, running time, writer, editor, cinematographer, producer, and director, evaluative rating, annotated cast list, plot synopsis, overall appraisal, and a spotlight on the actor playing Satan.

the deal with the devil: *Satan and the Problem of Evil* Gregory A. Boyd, 2025-08-04 Where does evil come from? If there is a sovereign creator God, as Christian faith holds, is this God ultimately responsible for evil? Does God's sovereignty mean that God causes each instance of sin and suffering? How do Satan, his demons and hell fit into God's providential oversight of all creation and history? How does God interact with human intention and action? If people act freely, does God know in particular every human decision before the choice is made? In this important book Gregory A. Boyd mounts a thorough response to these ages-old questions, which remain both crucial and contentious, both practical and complex. In this work Boyd defends his scripturally grounded trinitarian warfare theodicy (presented in *God at War*) with rigorous philosophical reflection and insights from human experience and scientific discovery. Critiquing the classical Calvinist solution to the problem of evil, he advocates an alternative understanding of the sovereignty of the trinitarian God and of the reality of Satan that sheds light on our fallen human condition. While all may not agree with Boyd's conclusions, *Satan and the Problem of Evil* promises to advance the church's discussion of these critical issues.

the deal with the devil: The History of the Devil Daniel Defoe, 2022-11-13 Daniel Defoe's 'The History of the Devil' is a captivating and thought-provoking exploration of the figure of the devil in Western culture. Written in Defoe's signature straightforward and descriptive prose, the book delves into the origins of the devil, his role in religious beliefs, and his influence on societal norms. Defoe draws on a wide range of historical and theological sources to present a comprehensive account of the devil's evolution over time, making the book a valuable resource for students of religion and literature alike. The narrative style and structure of the book resemble a historical chronicle, offering a detailed account of the devil's presence in various cultural and religious contexts. Through this lens, Defoe challenges readers to reconsider their perceptions of good and

evil, ultimately inviting reflection on the complexities of human nature and belief systems. As an author known for his insightful and thought-provoking works, Defoe's 'The History of the Devil' is a must-read for anyone interested in the intersection of religion, folklore, and literature.

the deal with the devil: The Devil You Don't Know William Landon, 2006-09-25 There are many traditional concepts of the devil in organized religion as well as in popular myth and culture. Nearly every worldview has an explanation for the evil we see in our daily life experiences. While we may not like to think much about the darker side of life, we instinctively seek a reason or cause for the negative parts of our experience in this world. In most of the explanations of evil there is some personification of hurt and suffering called Satan, the devil, the evil one or some other name. The Bible tells us a great deal about the enemy of God and humanity including the fact that he is bent on hurting God by harming us. Given the fact that Satan is dedicated to harming us, we would do well to have as clear and accurate an understanding of him as we can. Our best defense against any opponent is to know how they operate, what they are capable of and what their limitations and weaknesses are. Fortunately, we can do this without succumbing to an unhealthy level of obsession about the foe of all humanity. In this book you will find a nontraditional explanation of where and how Satan operates within humanity. This view deserves a hearing, as the prevailing ideas about the devil's working don't seem to be terribly effective for the purpose of aiding us in overcoming our adversary. Some may find the idea of a personal devil (Satan in the flesh) a disturbing or insulting concept. If you will give it a careful hearing, however, this unorthodox idea may just be a key understanding in your successful resistance to the evil one's desire to harm you.

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Is Slender Man a modern day demonic entity ... or totally fake? This fascinating look at Satan, evil spirits, and their 10,000-year history has 120 photographs, drawings, and illustrations to bring the portraits of over 200 demons and fallen angels to shivering life. Demons, the Devil, and Fallen Angels also includes a helpful bibliography and an extensive index, adding to its usefulness. It is a comprehensive, clear, and objective look at a subject that fills most people with fear and dread. Yet the presence of dark angels continues to remain a part of our human experience, our popular culture, and our spiritual understandings. Come and explore the shadowy side of existence and its integral part of our nature.

the deal with the devil: International Criminal Law Edwin Bikundo, 2016-04-22 This book analyses the relationship between law and violence, the utility of law over violence and whether legality as an approach has an inherent disability in addressing mass violence as a crime. The study is located within international law and assesses whether prosecuting political violence would necessarily entail an abuse of the legal process. The intention is to encourage definition of criminal aggression via legal processes laid down by the International Criminal Court, rather than giving favour to political action under the United Nations Charter. Issues discussed in the book include the controversies over the location of the crime of aggression in either law or politics, taking a legal approach to the problems outlined. Using examples from Libya, the Ivory Coast, and Kenya, the work will be of interest to those working in the areas of international criminal justice, international law, legal theory, and international relations.

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the deal with the devil: The Devil's Litter John Wayne Falbey, 2019-12-05 A quantum leap in human evolution is a good thing, right ...? Or is it? Meet the most fascinating and unforgettable characters in modern fiction. America's top-secret military and intelligence agencies discover a small group of unique individuals. They mold them into the deadliest, most formidable black ops unit in history. Nicknamed the Sleeping Dogs, their objective is to hunt and kill America's most dangerous enemies. Their training is so challenging they barely survive it; their missions are extraordinarily dangerous. Imagine their reaction when the government that created them betrays them. Award-winning, internationally best-selling author John Wayne Falbey has crafted another thriller that's perfect for fans of Vince Flynn, David Baldacci, and Daniel Silva. If international espionage and geopolitical intrigue fascinates you, this book will capture and hold your interest from the beginning. And the best news is it's a prequel to the existing thrillers in the Sleeping Dogs series.

the deal with the devil: The Devil's Children Jean La Fontaine, 2016-03-16 A number of cases of serious child abuse have resulted from beliefs that children may be possessed by evil spirits and may then be given the power to bewitch others. Misfortune, failure, illness and even death may be blamed on them. The 'cure', nowadays called deliverance rather than exorcism, is to expel the spirits, sometimes by violent means. This book draws together contributions on aspects of possession and witchcraft from leading academics and expert practitioners in the field. It has been put together following conferences held by Inform, a charity that provides accurate information on new religions as a public service. There is no comparable information publicly available; this book is the first of its kind. Eileen Barker, founder of Inform, introduces the subject and Inform's Deputy

Director goes on to detail the requests the charity has answered in recent years on the subject of children, possession and witchcraft. This book offers an invaluable resource for readers, whether academic or practitioner - particularly those in the fields of the safeguarding of children, and their education, health and general welfare.

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the deal with the devil: The Devil's All-American Shakir Rashaan, 2021-05-25 If you took a look at my life, you'd swear I had it all... I'm the best player on the best team in college basketball and a lock to be the top pick in the NBA Draft. I was on the fast track to being college basketball royalty, and nothing was going to stop me from being one of the best ever. Well, nothing except a tragic accident on the court that resulted in my worst nightmare. In the blink of an eye, my basketball life was hanging by a thread—until he came along with an offer I couldn't refuse. I knew his offer came with strings attached, but what I didn't know was what I gave up to get my life back. In hindsight, I shouldn't have done what I did, but it was too late to turn back now. I'm Keenan Ellis, and I'm the Devil's All-American...

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the deal with the devil: At the Devil's Table William C. Rempel, 2011-06-21 In this riveting and relentless nonfiction thriller, award-winning investigative reporter William C. Rempel tells the harrowing story of former Cali cartel insider Jorge Salcedo, an ordinary man facing an extraordinary dilemma—a man forced to risk everything to escape the powerful and treacherous Cali crime syndicate. Colombia in the 1990s is a country in chaos, as a weak government battles guerrilla movements and narco-traffickers, including the notorious Pablo Escobar and his rivals in the Cali cartel. Enter Jorge Salcedo, a part-time soldier, a gifted engineer, a respected businessman and family man—and a man who despises Pablo Escobar for patriotic and deeply personal reasons. He is introduced to the godfathers of the Cali cartel, who are at war with Escobar and desperately want their foe dead. With mixed feelings, Jorge agrees to help them. Once inside, Jorge rises to become

head of security for Miguel Rodríguez Orejuela, principal godfather of the \$7-billion-a-year Cali drug cartel. Jorge tries to turn a blind eye to the violence, corruption, and brutality that surround him, and he struggles privately to preserve his integrity even as he is drawn deeper into the web of cartel operations. Then comes an order from the godfathers that he can't obey—but can't refuse. Jorge realizes that his only way out is to bring down the biggest, richest crime syndicate of all time. Thus begins a heart-pumping roller-coaster ride of intensifying peril. Secretly aided by a pair of young American DEA agents, Jorge races time and cartel assassins to extract damaging evidence, help capture the fugitive godfather, and save the life of a witness targeted for murder. Through it all, death lurks a single misstep away. William C. Rempel is the only reporter with access to this story and to Jorge, who remains in hiding somewhere in the United States—even the author doesn't know where—but has revealed his experience in gripping detail. Salcedo's is the story of one extraordinary ordinary man forced to risk everything to end a nightmare of his own making.

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deal-maker | **Weblio** deal-maker 487

deal | **Weblio** deal

Deal - Weblio I can 't deal with mornings. Weblio Email deal with | Weblio deal with

good deal | **Weblio** good deal 1 (a large number or amount or extent) - 487

deal with - **Weblio** to make a person deal with something (何か)を扱う - EDR

deal with it | **Weblio** deal with it Wiktionary (2011/08/21 13:57 UTC) deal with (transitive) To handle verbally or in some form - 487

deal - Weblio deal, distribute, allot, administer, dish out, dole out, parcel out, lot, shell out, dispense, deal out, mete out

A great deal of | **Weblio** A great deal of - Weblio
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