Oh! the Sweet Trade!

This is a single-player or collaborative game, in which you captain a ship of blackguards and picaroons, sailing from port to port in search of booty. You can retire at any port, or else keep buccaneering for as long as it takes for (1) your crew to mutiny, (2) your crew to perish, or (3) your ship to be sunk. The currency of the game is dubloons, each of which is worth about 1 doubloon.

❧ SET-UP ❧

You will need: **a die**, **a coin to flip**, **a pencil and paper** for making calculations and tracking your statistics.

Said statistics have the following starting values:

MUTINOUSNESS: 2 (minimum: 0)
CREW: 20 (maximum: 50)
DAMAGE: 5 (minimum: 0)
DUBLOONS: 100 (minimum: 0)

❧ PLAY ❧

Play cycles through three phases: 'Setting Course', 'At-Sea Encounters' and 'Docked'. If at any point Mutinousness reaches 10 (the crew throw you overboard), Crew reaches 0 (you have no one left to trim the sails) or Damage reaches 30 (your ship sinks), the game is over.

❧ SETTING COURSE ❧

This phase involves careful calculation. Decide on your destination and, in the role of navigator, work out how to reach it. To do this, you need the distance in nautical miles, which is discovered via the following method.

1. Take the **first letters** of both the name of your departure point and the destination. Convert these letters into numbers using the formula A = 1, B = 2, C = 3 etc (see the conversion table on p. 65). Subtract the smaller number from the larger one.

2. Do the same for the **second and third letters** of your departure point and destination.

3. Arrange the three numbers in this order: **second largest**, **largest**, **smallest**. The first number represents how many hundreds of nautical miles (NM) you must travel, the second how many tens of NM on top of that, the third how many individual NM on top of that.

EXAMPLE:
To voyage from **Charles Town** to **Madagascar**:

a) Convert letters to number values
Charles Town: C=3,   H=8   A=1
Madagascar: M=13   A=1   D=4

b) Get differences
1st Letter: | 13 (M) - 3 (C)| = 10
2nd Letter: | 8 (H) - 1 (A)| = 7
3rd Letter: | 4 (D) - 1 (A)| = 3

c) Rearrange (Middle, Largest, Smallest)
7, 10, 3
Nautical Miles: (7 * 100) + (10 * 10) + (3) = 700 + 100 + 3

Total distance: 803 nm

⤸ AT-SEA ENCOUNTERS ⤺

For every 200 nautical miles you travel between ports, you must flip a coin to generate an encounter (minimum of one encounter per voyage). Heads gives you a positive development, tails a negative one.

For each encounter, roll the die and use the following tables to determine what happens:

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS:
1. A fair wind blows! **Skip past your next encounter. -1 Mutinousness.**
2. You board and capture a sloop! +**20 dubloons. +1 Crew.**
3. Mermaid sighting! **-2 Mutinousness.**
4. You board and capture a brigantine! +**50 dubloons. -1 Mutinousness. +2 Crew.**
5. "I've seen this somewhere before!" If you are carrying a Treasure Map, you follow it to an island where *X* marks the spot. +**100 dubloons. -1 Treasure Map.** If you do not possess a Treasure Map, talk of treasure nevertheless inspires the crew to make some repairs. **-2 Damage.**
6. You board and capture a galleon! +**100 dubloons. -2 Mutinousness. +6 Crew.**

NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS:
1. An ill-fated mishap! +**5 Damage. +1 Mutinousness.**
2. A fatal argument breaks out! **-3 Crew**.
3. Storm approaching! +**5 Damage. -2 Crew. +1 Mutinousness.**
4. Kraken! **-5 Crew. +1 Mutinousness.** Now flip the coin again for an extra encounter. If this results in a second Kraken encounter right after the first, lose only 1 Crew instead of 5.
5. Rations crisis! +**3 Mutinousness.**
6. Pursued and shot at by the navy! **Crew halved (rounded up).** +**5 Damage.** Roll again immediately. Another 6 means your ship is smashed to smithereens and the game is over.

⤸ DOCKED ⤺

Each port has different amenities to aid you on your next expedition, most (but not all) of which are optional. Here is the list of ports you can make for:

GRUBBLING COVE **(starting location)**
Barely more than a rash of bald rocks – froth-lapped, as if eternally toasted with overflowing tankards of beer.

There are here a few crude habitations, including that of Skurrel the Sea Hermit, and a shuttered pub whose faded sign once read *The King's Split Breeches*. Still, always a bit of spare timber going, a shipwrecked jack to join the ranks, stone tables for games of checkers. **When returning here, +1 Crew, -2 Damage, -1 Mutinousness.**

RAMPALLION GANGWAY

Almost indiscernible as a port town, so much is it akin to a mass of floating debris. Swampland, stilted houses, jetties and pontoons all strung together, and hundreds of thieves and fortune hunters clambering atop one another in competition to be the least respectable. You could probably swap your whole ship here, piece by piece. **Optional: set Damage to 5 for 50 dubloons. Buy up to 6 Crew for 3 dubloons and a penalty of +1 Mutinousness each. Purchase a Treasure Map for 10 dubloons.**

LARDLET

The best recruitment station in the southern hemisphere – brimming with newly trained jobseekers and keen apprentices, many with economics degrees. **Optional: buy up to 12 Crew for 5 dubloons each.**

TRUCULENCE

A long, narrow tropical island, like a moustache upon the sea, bushy to the point of unkemptness. Many small harbours, invisible to those who do not seek them. Many waterfalls and fruits also. Sailors are liable to choose to desert their ship here, disappearing into the undergrowth. Others, having taken up residence months or years ago, itch to risk life and limb once more. **Optional: set Crew to 20, -2 Mutinousness for 20 dubloons.**

PUDIFACT PORT

A circular walled city, well-guarded and thought to be entirely cleansed of pirates. You know better! For a larger-than-standard fee, you may discreetly slip in and set to. A bonus payment to your crew will ensure they have a grand time at the local karaoke bars. **-5 dubloons. Optional: set Mutinousness to 4 at a cost of 30 dubloons.**

VULTUOUS PEDUNCLE

Fortified outpost atop a high set of crags, these shaped like an immense, thin horse skull with the top sawn off. Well-known pirate lords such as 'Hot Ham' Huang and Carroll the Mink hold court here, and a sense of crooked discipline reigns. Good company! **-3 Mutinousness. Optional: purchase a Treasure Map for 10 dubloons.**

BAJULATE BAY

A self-sustaining philosophical commune at the far end of an inlet, offering free classes in a variety of mindful pursuits. The residents are usually happy to help with minor repairs. **-3 Mutinousness, -5 Damage.**

NIDIFICE

Famed for its shipwrights and carpenters, as well as its citizens' neutrality on matters piratical, Nidifice is a

thick tangle of masts and towers, its wide canals running deep into the mainland. There's little in the way of entertainment, but you can't have everything. **Optional: reduce Damage by up to 10 for 5 dubloons a point.**

JUSSULENT ISLE

A treacherous, mist-bedogged, howling place. Little to recommend it. Any lengthy stop will yield a supplement of capable men – villagers from the pungent, bullrush-forested marshes – but will also result in your hold being raided. **+8 Crew, -100 dubloons. Optional: purchase a Treasure Map for 10 dubloons.**

SCAEVITY HAVEN

The bright bleeding lights of Scaevity can be seen all the way from New Anachronism. In this pirate stronghold, the only trade is gambling. Cards! Bones! Roulette! Mahjong! Scrabble! Hopscotch! Buckaroo! Slippery Wrist! 'Oo's Yer Captain! Scunthorpe! Radishes! Love Moan! Inspector Nougat! **Optional: choose an amount of dubloons to gamble, and flip a coin to decide the outcome. Heads: double your money! Tails: lose your stake.**

A = 1
B = 2
C = 3
D = 4
E = 5
F = 6
G = 7
H = 8
I = 9
J = 10
K = 11
L = 12
M = 13
N = 14
O = 15
P = 16
Q = 17
R = 18
S = 19
T = 20
U = 21
V = 22
W = 23
X = 24
Y = 25
Z = 26