

If all your friends jumped off the plank, would you?"

"Ha, no," said Sandy.

"Saving for retirement can be tough, especially when fighting against two powerful enemies."

Owen became tense and looked around. "Show me the enemies and I'll show 'em me blade."

"I don't think your cutlass will do any good against these enemies," said Joey.

"I bet it will!" Owen exclaimed as he drew his sword, spinning around to look for the opponents.

"We'll see. The first enemy is inflation."

"Inflation?" Owen looked perplexed as he put away his cutlass.

"I be knowing that," said Rusty. "The other day I saw a kid with a circular plastic inflation. He tried to attach it to the back of our ship with a rope to ride the waves."

Joey smirked. He was starting to find Rusty's bizarre comments amusing. "No, that's an inflatable tube. Inflation is how things tend to cost more over time. For example, about seventy years ago you could go see a movie and get popcorn for one dollar. You could buy a Hershey bar for ten cents about fifty years ago. And twenty years ago gasoline was less than one dollar per gallon."

Owen said, "I've never been to a movie, bought a Hershey bar, or driven a car. What does that have to do with us?"

Joey tried to put the concept into pirate terms. "How much does a bottle of rum cost today?"

"Twenty doubloons," said Owen.

"In forty years, assuming a modest 2% annual inflation rate, that same bottle of rum will cost more than forty doubloons."

Owen got upset that something he had never heard of would make his rum more expensive. "Argh, inflation. I'll cleave it to the brisket!"

Sandy was not happy discovering that more challenges stood in her way to financial freedom. "What be the other enemy?"

"Taxes. They take away money from your paycheck, which makes it harder to save, and they eat away your investment returns over time." He paused. "But there is a way to avoid taxes for decades