

A woman in a white top and dark skirt stands on a narrow, overhanging rock ledge. Below her is a vast, hazy valley with rolling hills and a winding road. The entire scene is tinted with a reddish-pink hue.

Precariat!

*a game about
getting by,
together*

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It never gets easier. Each month more unbearable than the last. Last couple of hours you've been trying to make a room of suits, people supposedly paying for your expertise, actually ***listen*** to you. You don't have a lot in the fridge — some dried pasta, sauces, nothing actually fresh — there's damp in your room, and you haven't ***created*** anything in weeks; your flat is so cold that your hands go numb unless you wrap yourself in blankets as you work.

But, you think, smile creeping onto your face as key slides into lock, ***I live with some fucking rad people.*** Meike and Ali: people who make you feel good about who you are, make you feel human, alive. Work is shit, you're not sure if you can make rent this month, but you're not alone.

Tonight you'll party. You'll invite some friends, cook tasty food and drink good wine. You'll spend money you don't have, but who gives a fuck? ***Everything will be great.***

Precariat!

by Adam Dixon and Harry Giles

vo.1 for #rentpunk gamejam 2015.

This is a public beta release of *Precariat!* We've tried it out and reckon it works, but there's loads more we want to do. We'll be playtesting it, tightening rules and expanding its scope. In the future we'll do a full release. We'd really love your feedback. If you read it or play it get in touch:

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Introductions

What am I reading?

You're reading the rules for a storytelling improv game thing called *Precariat!* You play this with a group of friends and tell the stories of people living together at the precarious edge of their society.

The stories in *Precariat!* are about people building meaning on the edge; about not just surviving but loving, making and fighting against life's hardness. They're collaborative stories: you'll tell the story together with friends, and a lot of the story will be about how your characters support each other when they fight, make up, make out and make do.

You might tell the story of a pair of misfits living in a loft in Weimar Berlin, dodging fascist mobs and singing in nightclubs. You might tell the story of a family of spacepeons, picking up jobs on the Orbitals around Fade for the oxycreds that'll let you can breathe for another month. You might tell the story of a coven of witches foraging herbs for the potions that'll stop the local villages breaking out the pitchforks. Or you might tell the story of rock trolls in service to the quartz barons of G'thunk, wishing for more time for carving their traditional diamondwork.

There are an infinite number of stories you might tell, but what connects them all is that they're stories about life's precariousness and where survival is about supporting each other.

Okay, so how is this thing played?

This game is played in a group: sat together around a table, in a living room or through webcams. It's designed for 2 to 5 players. It's played over several sessions, called **seasons**, and each **season** should last 2-3 hours. Four **seasons** is a good amount for one story to play out, but to start with it's best to commit to one and see if you all enjoy it.

In this game you tell a shared story about characters who all live together. You each control one of these characters and contribute from their perspective. Advocate from their position, get invested in their life, and try to do what is best for them. At the same time you should realise that everything going well for them would make for a terrible story. We should also work as dispassionate directors of their fate — push them into precarious situations, make bad decisions, expose their flaws.

You play by rolling dice, drawing cards and telling stories about what they mean. There are rules to organising who speaks when, rules helping give ideas for stories to tell, and rules to keep pressure high on your household.

One principle of playing *Precariat!* is that the rules should always be in the service of telling a great story. Every time you follow a rule -- whether that's rolling a die, drawing a card or applying a penalty -- you should tell the story of what that means in the world you're creating. Throughout these rules, you'll find examples of how that works

What does the name mean?

"Precariat" is a name for people in society whose life is unpredictable and insecure: they don't have regular jobs, they don't have their own houses, and they're often vulnerable. Supermarket and call centre workers on zero hours contracts, disinherited queer artists, young freelancers and drop-outs are all often precarious workers, members of the precariat. Living a precarious life is

hard and scary. We want to tell honest stories of difficult precarious lives — but we also want to tell stories of how the precariat make beautiful things, explore radical relationships, support each other, and survive.

One of the ways we can do that is by imagining what the precariat might look like in all sorts of different realms. All that matters is that life in your realm is precarious, unpredictable and insecure: everything else is up to you! The whole story is up to you.

The first time

Getting ready

Before you play for the first time you should make sure that at least one player has read the rules — probably you, the person reading this right now. It's their job to facilitate the session, help people be excited for the game, feel comfortable, and teach the rules.

The other players should work to ease the pressure on the facilitator — organise time to play, offer lifts, be enthusiastic and cook food. Above all be supportive of each other, be aware of the time it takes to arrange this and enjoy yourself. Be aware of yours and other's energy, if you don't feel supportive one session it's okay to sit it out.

The facilitator should make sure that a few things are available for the first session:

- The rules
- A **Realm Sheet**.
- A **Worker Sheet** for each of the players.
- Dice, 5 or 6 for each player — it works best when each player has a set of dice that are different from the rest. If you don't have enough dice, that's OK! You can write things down instead, or use a website like [this one](#).
- Sheets of paper and pencils to make notes with.
- A deck of playing cards.
- A stack of little things to use as tokens (printed out from here, or substituted with coins, matchsticks, or similar).
- A great soundtrack.

Making your realm

The **realm** is the world that you're playing in — not a world as in planets, but rather themes and structures and situations; relationships with people, with money, and with power.

You build your **realm** together. Place the **Realm Sheet** in the centre of the table, between all of the players. Give each person a pencil.

First, have a talk about the kind of game you want to play. Where is it set: modern day, historical, near future, in space, in a fantasy realm, or something else? Record a brief description on the sheet.

Ali: How would you all feel about playing in some sort of near future light sci fi scenario?

Rajni: Yeah!

Meike: Yeah, that'd be cool. Maybe after some sort of environmental catastrophe?

Rajni: So somewhere a bit like today, but maybe a lot of the coast has been flooded. And maybe there are wealthy enclaves, but most people live in partially-flooded slums?

Ali: Sounds good. Maybe we could set it here, in Birmingham, a hundred years in the future? Like, we could call it New Birmingham.

[Everyone says they're happy with this suggestion. Meike writes "New Birmingham: After the Flood" on the Realm Sheet.]

Next, the facilitator should read the questions below, encouraging all players to contribute. It's important each player has an opportunity to be the first person to answer a question, though everyone should contribute on each. Record the answers on the **Realm Sheet**

1. What resources do you need to get by, and why are they so hard to get?
2. Who controls the resources, and what are their tools for keeping power?
3. Why is it hard for most people to find a steady job?
4. What will tear us apart if we let it?

We should talk about each of these questions before recording an answer on the realm sheet. Keep the answers short, they will be built on through play.

Meike: OK, so, question one. "What resources do you need to get by, and why are they so hard to get?"

Ali: I guess it's food, shelter and clean water most of all.

Rajni: Yeah, and the streets are half-flooded, but lots of the water's polluted, so that's going to be hard.

Meike: And the economy's collapsed, so good food and shelter are going to be expensive and hard to get.

Rajni: Cool. Next? "Who controls the resources, and what are their tools for keeping power?"

Meike: I think there are going to be a lot of slumlords, and they probably have some nasty hired muscle to enforce and collect rent.

Ali: Sure. I like the idea that maybe having control of the food supply is really important to. Maybe the people who run the hydroponic gardens have a lot of power?

Rajni: And they live in high-security high-rises!

[They keep going til the scenario is a little more fleshed out, and write down brief summaries on the realm sheet.]

Meike: So, Rajni, your worker's called Billie, is that right? Let's start with the questions. How does Billie make most of their money?

Rajni: So Billie likes experimenting with new ways of growing food. Maybe there's some funky plants in our house. So they find some work in the hydroponic gardens, but occasionally they're able to sell some homebrew tech as well.

Ali: Coool. Well, like I said, Efe's a graffiti artist, which doesn't pay very well. Maybe... I think Efe's really good with her hands, so maybe she does maintenance work? Like, she fixes the pumps that keep buildings dry and heating ducts and stuff like that. I'll figure out the rest as we go.

Meike: That totally works. I'm not sure about Tiya yet either! I think she's a bit of a jack-of-all-trades, hasn't figured out what she loves yet. So she just picks up grunt work where she can.

[They keep going for the rest of the questions, leaving gaps and possibilities where they need to.]

Finally, each player decides on a **compromise** for their worker. A way to get money, when everything else fails — a way that costs them emotionally, physically or socially. Maybe they have to beg their parents for a bail-out, but their parents demand something in return? Maybe they know an infamous loanfairy, who takes her interest in blood? Make it good, and make it hard. Record on the **Worker Sheet**.

Meike: Tiya's brother works as an enforcer for a local slumlord. She hates that. But she knows if she's ever truly stuck for cash, her brother could find enforcer work for her. It would pay, but it would lose her a lot of friends -- and her sense of who she is.

[Meike writes "Ask brother for a job" under Compromise]

Pick one player to be the **lead player**. There's no pressure: this role is straightforward and rotates regularly. Each player takes four ordinary dice.

Now you're ready to **tell the story**.

Playing the game

The structure

Precariat! is a structured game: it has a rhythm and beat to it that it designed to feel like working life. A session of *Precariat!* — each time you meet up and play for a bit — is called a **season**. A season takes 3-4 hours.

Each season is split up into three **months**, and each month into four **weeks**. Each season you'll play a total of 12 weeks, 12 beats of play.

Each week is divided into two: the **workweek** and the **weekend**.

In the workweek, you describe how your characters try to make rent, look after themselves, keep happy, and resist. This is the mechanical bit, you roll some dice and choose where to focus your energies.

At the weekend you draw a card and consult the **Weekend Diary**. You see what fun you get to have — you might have a party, go on a holiday, argue with each other or find love. This bit is about exploring your own and the others players' characters.

Every fourth week is a tougher week, because we need to pay rent. But after three months (or twelve weeks) we get to hold a house party! We'll get to how these work later.

The workweek

During the workweek you play out the lives of your workers. Together you tell a story of how the week has gone, individually and collectively.

Everyone rolls some dice, which represent the worker's efforts that week, and then assign them to different **actions**. These **actions** are **earning, loving, making** and **resisting**.

Earning is about making enough to live and pay rent.

Loving is about being happy, looking after yourself, and caring for the people in your life.

Making is about being creative, feeling rewarded, and keeping the house in order.

Resisting is about the struggle against your rulers, against prejudice, or to survive.

Each player starts with a pool of four dice, which represents the energy workers have to put into their lives. Every workweek each player rolls their current pool of dice simultaneously. The numbers rolled on their dice are the scores they get to assign this week — the higher the better. (The number of dice, rolls, and scores on them may be modified by **conditions**, which we'll talk about in a bit). Dice are then assigned onto the different actions by the players.

Players take it in turns to assign dice, starting with the lead player and going clockwise. They take one of their dice and assign it to an action, placing it on the Realm Sheet.

When you assign a die to an action tell the story of that action — describe what the worker has (or hasn't) done that week to earn, love, make or resist. The higher the die, the better that worker's contribution. You should keep these stories short, a line or two. Sometimes another player may want to ask a question about your story: that's okay, but keep your answers short too.

You don't have to put your dice into categories in a specific order — you can choose as you go, responding to each other's contributions. Because the house is trying to meet the target collectively, who puts what die into what pool can be a source of tension: If someone doesn't put much into earning, what is the house going to do about it? And if someone is really loving one week, how does that affect the house?

Rajni: *[puts a 5 die into earning]* I got really lucky this week, and got a consultancy gig with a foodcorp on the other side of town. It pays better than what I usually have to do, and I had a good time thinking about it, for once.

Ali: *[puts a 2 die into resisting]* I went out on a tagging mission, trying to claim some territory around the Aston Enclave (hate those guys), but I got chased off by their hired meatheads pretty quickly. Narrow escape, but I'm fine.

Meike: *[puts a 6 die into making]* I spent most of the week holed up in my room working on my book. I feel like I'm making a massive breakthrough. It's really exhilarating!

Rajni: *[notices that Meilke's other dice are pretty low]* I think half-way through the week Billie knocks on Tiya's door and awkwardly raises the question of whether she's going to make rent this week.

Meike: Tiya's too wrapped up in her writing to get the hint. Things are going to get tense around this.

Sometimes you will have more than 4 dice. You can still only assign 4 — one die to each action — so this just means you have more storytelling options and better chances. Sometimes you will have fewer than 4 dice, or will have a penalty that will reduce a die's value to 0. If this happens you don't miss a turn: instead, describe what causes you not to contribute at all to that category. 0 is the worst roll that you can contribute, so narrations should be about wilful negligence or catastrophic failures.

Once everyone has assigned all their dice to actions you work out the collective outcomes your efforts. One by one total up the scores of each action and compare it to the tables on the Realm Sheet. You might meeting your target, exceed it and gain positive **conditions**, or fall short and get negative **conditions**. In turn, starting with the **lead player**, each player **tells the story** of how they feel at the end of the week, based on the **conditions** they've now gained and the state of the **actions**.

[Everyone's assigned their dice. There's 12 in Resisting and 13 in Making, but only 11 in Earning and 9 in Loving. Ali writes 11 next to the right week in the Earning box.]

Ali: So Making is all clear, and Meike, we're +1 in making, which means your 6 gets you an inspiration token. You're inspired!

Meike: And I haven't got any boredom tokens, so that means I get a bonus point to spend next workweek.

Rajni: But we're a little short in Earning, so we need to watch for that next week, and we're -3 in loving, which means both you, Meike, and you, Ali, get a stressed token. The house is getting stressed!

Meike: I had a joyous token from last week, so that cancels out and I'm OK, but Ali, you get one fewer dice next week. Oh. Sorry.

Ali: It's OK, it's a good story! Here goes: Efe is pretty upset with Tiya for not contributing properly this week, and that she doesn't get to spend as much time on her own hobbies.

Meike: Tiya's still exhilarated from all the writing, but she's picking up on the tension in the house and doesn't know what to do about it.

Conditions

Workers can gain conditions from their successes and failures during the **workweek**, and from events in the **weekend diary**. There are six conditions, in three pairs: **joyous/stressed** (caused by succeeding/failing in **loving**), **inspired/bored** (caused by succeeding/failing in **making**), and **fired up/burnt out** (caused by succeeding/failing in **resisting**).

Conditions bestow tokens in this way:

Level above/below target	Effect
+5 or better	Everyone takes a bonus token
+3 to +4	The two players who contributed most take a bonus token
+1 to +2	The one player who contributed most takes a bonus token
0	No effect
-1 to -2	The one player who contributed least takes a penalty token
-3 to -4	The two players who contributed least take a penalty token
-5 or worse	Everyone takes a penalty token

All conditions have an effect on a player's dice. These are:

Action	Condition	Effect
Loving	Joyous	Each joy token means the worker rolls one more dice each workweek (but still only assigns 4)
	Stressed	Each stress token means the worker rolls one fewer dice each workweek.
Making	Inspired	Each inspiration token means the worker adds one to the score of the die of their choice each workweek
	Bored	Each boredom token means the worker subtracts one from their best die each workweek
Resisting	Fired Up	Each fire token means the worker can reroll the die of their choice each workweek
	Burnt Out	Each burn token means the worker must reroll their best die each workweek

Tokens stack. If a player has two fire tokens, they get two rerolls that workweek. If a player has three boredom tokens, they must subtract three points from the best dice in their roll: if they rolled 1, 2, 5, 6, they would turn the 6 down twice and the five down once, leaving them 1, 2, 4, 4.

Paired tokens cancel each other out. If a player takes an inspiration token and already has a bored token then they get rid of the bored token instead. If a player takes a burnt token and already has two fire tokens, they get rid of one fire token instead, leaving them one fire token.

Ending Montage

When the house is short on rent and no-one has a compromise they're willing to make, bad stuff happens. You decided what this meant when you created your realm. When bad stuff happens, find a heartbreaking, mournful song to play and tell the story of the ending montage.

Each player in turn, starting with the lead player and going clockwise, describes where they end up after the household falls apart. Be specific. Take it in turn to conjure an image, continue taking it in turns until you feel ready to stop or the song ends.

Standing by an FTL Gate and thumbing a lift on the nearest star cruiser; parents crying over your crushed remains after you failed to pay tribute to Hrall, the Goblin King; digging through the waste vats at the processing plant hoping for anything that'll let you pay your debts.

Tell it! It's the end of the game, so make it good.

House Party

If your group makes it to the end of a season without bad stuff happening, well done! Find dramatic, triumphant set of songs to play and tell the story of the House Party. The party happens in three stages: preparing, partying, and praising. While the music plays:

Collectively decide the kind of party you want to have. It might be a wild day of dancing, a quiet meal with a few friends, or a few hours huddled round a campfire, passing a bottle of Arcturan Brandy and avoiding the Cyberdog patrols. Something that fits your realm.

Describe how you prepare your party. Each player saying what their worker does to make the party amazing. Do they invite loads of friends? Brew up a special psychedelic potion? Paint the walls purple?

Party! Pass the lead player role on to the next player. Now, each player in turn describes one amazing moment from the party. What spectacular thing happens for them? Do you make out with the swampbeast you've been too shy to talk to? Do you sit on the roof and stare at the sparkling nanobot swarms passing overhead? Each moment should build on the moment before, so that the players are working together to tell the story of an amazing party.

Lastly, in those moments after the party has disbanded and the workers are sat around, elated and exhausted, you praise each other. Pass the lead player role on again. Each player takes a moment to thank another worker for something brilliant they've done over the course of the season. Be genuine, and make sure that each worker gets thanked for something. Make the last things you say this season be the most important things your workers could say.

The clean-up can wait for the morning.

Weekend Diary

Hearts: Relationships

Card Event

- Romance blooms*
Ace Pick a worker. They realise they're falling in love. This can be with another worker of their choice, or with a different character. Ask them what they do about their feelings. If the scene ends with a blossoming relationship, any workers involved take a joy token.
- Raise a grievance*
2 Pick a worker. They're angry and frustrated with another worker. Ask them how they decide to bring up the issue. If the scene ends with resolution, both workers can lose a stress token; if the scene ends with a fight, both workers must gain a stress token.
- Resolve a conflict*
3 Pick a worker. They decide to try and resolve a conflict in their life, with a worker or another character. Ask them how they do it. If the scene ends with resolution, any workers involved can lose a stress token; if the scene ends with a fight, any workers involved must gain a stress token.
- A family crisis*
4 Pick a worker. They receive news of a major crisis in their family. Ask them what that crisis is, and how they deal with it. Depending on what happens in the scene, decide together what tokens they get.
- A surprise meeting*
5 Pick a worker. They meet someone unexpected from their past. Ask them who that is, and how they deal with it. Depending on what happens in the scene, decide together what tokens they get.
- An exciting invitation*
6 Pick a worker, and describe to them an invitation they receive to an amazing event. Ask them what they do. If they go, they gain a joy token.
- A good samaritan*
7 Pick a worker, and ask them to describe a dangerous or painful situation they get into. Ask another player to play someone who offers help.
- A stranger in need*
8 Pick a worker, and describe a stranger who comes to them asking for help. Ask what they do. If they help successfully, they gain a joy token. If doing so costs them money, they can't assign anything to earning next workweek.
- Anniversary*
9 Pick a worker who's currently in a relationship. It's their anniversary! Ask what they do. If it goes well, they gain a joy token. If it goes badly, they gain a stress token.
- A mysterious message*
10 Pick a worker, and describe a mysterious message they receive. Ask what they do.
- A broken heart*
Jack Pick a worker who has important relationship(s), friends or family, or two workers who are in a relationship. Ask someone to break someone's heart -- the heart of a worker or a character, as they choose. Any workers involved gain a stress token.
- A wonderful memory about love*
Queen Pick a worker and ask them to tell a wonderful romantic story from their past.
- A terrible memory about love*
King Pick a worker and ask them to describe a heartbreaking memory from their past.

Diamonds: Money

Card	Event
Ace	<p><i>Windfall</i> Rent decreases by 1, permanently. Everyone decides together why, and each worker in turn describes how they react.</p>
2	<p><i>A surprising opportunity</i> Pick a worker, and describe a surprising opportunity they find to earn. Ask them what they do. If they take it, roll a die to find out how it goes and add that to next workweek's Earning.</p>
3	<p><i>Theft</i> Pick a worker and roll a die. On odds, they're stolen from; on evens, they see an opportunity to steal. Ask them what they do. If they lose money, roll a die and subtract that from next workweek's Earning.</p>
4	<p><i>A brush with fame</i> Pick one or more workers. They meet someone famous in a field they really care about. Ask them what they do.</p>
5	<p><i>A terrible loss</i> Pick a worker. They lose something really important to them. Ask them what it is, and what they do.</p>
6	<p><i>Extravagant spending</i> Pick a worker. They decide to treat themselves. Roll a die to find out how much they spend, and subtract that from next workweek's earning. Ask them what they do.</p>
7	<p><i>A dangerous offer</i> Pick a worker, and describe a dangerous offer they receive. If they take it, they ask another worker to come with them if they want. Roll a die to find out how it goes: odds is bad, evens is good, and the higher it is the more dramatic. Ask them to play the scene. Even rolls get added to next workweek's earning; odd rolls get subtracted.</p>
8	<p><i>An unexpected find</i> Pick a worker, and describe something unexpected they find. Ask them what they do. If they gain money, roll a die and add that to next workweek's Earning.</p>
9	<p><i>A gamble</i> Pick a worker, and describe a gamble they can take. Ask them what they do. If they take it, roll a die to find out how it goes: odds is bad, evens is good, and the higher it is the more dramatic. Ask them to play the scene. Even rolls get added to next workweek's earning; odd rolls get subtracted.</p>
10	<p><i>A friend asks for help</i> Pick a worker, and describe a situation where a friend asks them for money. Roll a die to find out how much. Ask them what they do. If they give it, subtract that from next workweek's earning.</p>
Jack	<p><i>Gentrification</i> Rent has increased by 2, permanently. Everyone decides together why, and each worker in turn describes how they react.</p>
Queen	<p><i>A wonderful memory about love</i> Pick a worker and ask them to tell a funny story about money from their past.</p>
King	<p><i>A terrible memory about love</i> Pick a worker and ask them to describe a frightening memory about money from their past.</p>

Spades: Work

Card	Event
Ace	<p><i>A joint project</i> An event for everyone, including you. You decide to do a big creative project together. If you all agree on an idea and everyone's happy with the result you describe together, everyone takes an inspiration token.</p>
2	<p><i>Inspiration strikes</i> Choose a worker. They get a brilliant new idea for a project they're working on. Ask them what it is and what they do. They take one inspiration token.</p>
3	<p><i>A new skill</i> Choose a worker. They decide to learn a new skill. Ask them what it is. They take one inspiration token, but cannot earn above a 3 the next workweek, until they've mastered it.</p>
4	<p><i>Cleaning day</i> Choose a worker. They decide that the house is a terrible mess and ask everyone to help clean. Every worker that joins in takes a boredom token, and for every worker that doesn't join in the nominated player takes a stress token.</p>
5	<p><i>Stuck in a rut</i> Choose a worker. They are stuck on a project they really care about and ask another worker for help. If it goes well, they gain an inspiration token; if it goes badly they gain a boredom token.</p>
6	<p><i>Difficult competition</i> Choose a worker. They are faced with difficult competition for their main source of income. Ask them what they do. If the competition remains at the end of the scene, they roll a die and subtract that from next week's earning.</p>
7	<p><i>An injury</i> Choose a worker. They receive an injury that makes it hard to work. Ask them what it is, and what they do about it.</p>
8	<p><i>Home improvements</i> An event for everyone, including you. Decide together what your house needs and how everyone can contribute. Roll a die to find out how well it goes, tell the story, and add that to next week's Making pool.</p>
9	<p><i>Something is broken</i> Choose a worker. They discover that something important in the house is broken and try to fix it. Roll a die to find out what happens: on evens they fix it; on odds it gets worse. Ask them what happens next.</p>
10	<p><i>A day of play</i> An event for everyone, including you. You all need to relax a little. Everyone in turn describes what they do to relax, and takes a relevant token.</p>
Jack	<p><i>A difficult job offer</i> Choose a worker, and describe an offer of work they receive that is frightening or compromising. Ask them what they do. If they take it, roll a die and add the result to next week's earning.</p>
Queen	<p><i>A wonderful memory about work</i> Pick a worker and ask them to tell the house about a project they're really proud of.</p>
King	<p><i>A terrible memory about work</i> Pick a worker and ask them to describe a past project that failed miserably.</p>

Clubs: Power

Card	Event
Ace	<p><i>A protest</i></p> <p>An event for everyone, including you. Describe a political protest that's happening. Who goes? Each player who goes rolls a die: on odds something bad happens and they gain a burn token; on evens something good happens and they gain a fire token. They tell the story, and whatever happens the best die roll gets added to next workweek's resisting.</p>
2	<p><i>A crackdown</i></p> <p>An event for everyone, including you. The powers on your world are cracking down on resistance. Each player in turn describes how this affects them.</p>
3	<p><i>In trouble with the authorities</i></p> <p>Choose a worker. Something they do gets them in trouble with the authorities. Ask them what happens, and what they do.</p>
4	<p><i>Learning a dark secret</i></p> <p>Choose a worker. They make a confession about a dark secret in their past to another worker.</p>
5	<p><i>A promise</i></p> <p>Choose a worker. Describe a character in their lives who makes them a huge promise. Ask them how they react.</p>
6	<p><i>A lie</i></p> <p>Choose a worker. They find themselves in a situation where they tell a dramatic lie. Ask them what it is and what they do.</p>
7	<p><i>A struggle for control</i></p> <p>Choose a worker. They pick a character or another worker and challenge them over control of something important. If they don't win, they take a fire token.</p>
8	<p><i>Being exploited</i></p> <p>Choose a worker. Describe a situation where they are badly exploited and ask them what they do. If they fight back, they take a fire token; if not, a burn token.</p>
9	<p><i>A chance to exploit</i></p> <p>Choose a worker. Describe a situation where they have a chance to exploit someone. Ask them what they do. Any other worker involved who fights back gains a burn token.</p>
10	<p><i>Getting away with it</i></p> <p>Choose a worker. Describe a chance they have to commit a serious crime and be fairly sure of getting away with it. If they take it, they gain a burn token.</p>
Jack	<p><i>Deep beliefs challenged</i></p> <p>Choose a worker. Tell them a new fact about the world that challenges one of their core beliefs. Ask them what they do.</p>
Queen	<p><i>A wonderful memory about power</i></p> <p>Choose a worker, and ask them to describe a memory of triumphantly fighting against authority.</p>
King	<p><i>A terrible memory about power</i></p> <p>Choose a worker, and ask them to describe a memory of being hopelessly defeated by authority.</p>

Appendix 1: Mods and Expansions

We've designed *Precariat!* to balance a few things: it's hard enough to finish a season safely that you'll feel a lot of pressure most of the time, but not so hard as to be too miserable; it's about the right length for a season to fit into one session, but can be played for longer; it's adaptable to different sizes of groups. But different groups and people have different needs, and that might mean tweaking the rules. If you want to tweak them, do it! And let us know what your favourite house rules are. Here are some suggestions.

Playing Solo

Storytelling games can work solo, either as a game or as a way of generating plot ideas. A lot of *Precariat!*'s fun thrives on conflict and co-operation inside a group, but a solo game would have an interestingly different feel: precariousness is much harder and scarier alone. Some suggestions on how to do this:

- Use dice frequently to randomise how characters interact with your worker
- Give yourself an extra compromise or start with some bonus tokens if you want to survive the season
- Write down your story as you go and use the game to make it a novel!

Shorter Games

A season should last two-three hours. If you want to play a full season but don't have enough time, you can play a shorter game in one of these ways:

- Speed up your orbit and play with fewer weeks in the month. Reduce the rent per month accordingly. This will make the game slightly harder.
- Longer working hours! Play two workweeks in sequence before you get a weekend. This will make the game a lot harder.
- Fewer times to tell the story. Rather than telling the story whenever you assign a die, have everyone assign their dice in order and then go round once to tell the story of the workweek in summary.

Larger Groups

Larger groups make everything longer, so with more than five you might want to try a mod from the shorter games section above. They also make everything a bit easier, because total rolls are more likely to tend to the average, and there are more chances to rescue each other. Some ways you can rebalance things are:

- Start with one penalty token per player
- Allow fewer compromises for the group as a whole
- Make tougher penalties start with less bad scores
- Be less generous with tokens in the weekend
- Raise the rent by two points

Easing Up

If you're finding the game too stressful and fancy an easier ride, you can do the inverse of what you'd do for larger groups.

- Start with one bonus token per player
- Allow each player two compromises
- Make tougher penalties start later, with more bad scores
- Be more generous with tokens in the weekend
- Lower the rent by two points

More Love and Co-operation

If you want a more generous and less burdened house, try this rule. While a player must always take a penalty token when, when a player gains a bonus token they now have the option of giving that bonus token to another player as long as they **tell the story** of what happens. Why are they giving it away? Did the other worker have to ask for it? Will they do anything in return?

Rajni: Our great score in Loving this week means I got a bonus die. But I'm already on 4 so I don't really need it. I know Tiya's been really stressed and upset about the money situation, so I knock on her door and ask to talk.

Meike: Tiya comes to the door and she's been crying. "Yeah," she sniffles.

Rajni: I wrap Tiya up in a big hug and we sit down on her bed. I say that I understand she's been really low recently and work's hard to get at the best of times. I try to let her know that we're here for her and will help out while things are bad.
[Rajni hands Meike a die.]

Meike: Tiya's really grateful, but also really embarrassed. "I'll work hard next week, I swear," she says. "I won't disappoint you!"

Rajni: "You never disappointed us."

Seasonal Variety

If you're playing over multiple seasons, you can add variety by adding bonuses and penalties to each season:

In spring it's harder to resist but easier to work. Subtract 2 from the Resisting pool each workweek, and add 2 to the Earning pool.

In summer it's harder to make but easier to resist. Subtract 2 from the Making pool each workweek, and add 2 to the Resisting pool.

In autumn it's harder to love but easier to make. Subtract 2 from the Loving pool each workweek, and add 2 to the Making pool.

In winter it's harder to work but easier to love. Subtract 2 from the Earning pool each workweek, but add 2 to the Loving pool.

Change the World

Precariat! isn't a heroic game — or rather, the heroic thing in our worlds is just surviving. But if you want a heroic mod, try this: If your house collectively collects fire tokens totalling 3 times the number of players, and everyone agrees, you can spend them all to change something fundamental about your world. It's not enough for a full revolution, but it's something pretty damn dramatic. Tell the story.

Appendix 2: Resources for Precarious Workers

Resources on organising for precarious workers' rights:

- Precarious Workers Brigade: <http://precariousworkersbrigade.tumblr.com/> (UK-based organising and resource hub)
- Carrotworkers' Collective: <https://carrotworkers.wordpress.com/> (UK-based organisation focussed on cultural industries)
- Industrial Workers of the World: <http://www.iww.org/> (a radical union for all workers, historically the union of the most marginalised groups)

Discussion on precarity:

- Guy Standing: "The Precariat: The new dangerous class". http://www.policy-network.net/pno_detail.aspx?ID=4004&title=+The+Precariat+%E2%80%93+The+new+dangerous+class (credited with popularising the term)
- Andrew Ross: "Nice Work If You Can Get It". <http://nyupress.org/books/9780814776919/>
- Precarious Europe: <http://www.precariouseurope.com> (Europe-wide journalism on issues of precarity)
- Everyday Tales of the Precariat: <http://quixotian.tumblr.com/> (news, comment and snark)
- Prole.info: <http://www.prole.info/> (Great introductions to class politics from a workers' perspective)
- The New Inquiry: Precarity: <http://thenewinquiry.com/tag/no-1-precarity/> (discussion from many perspectives)

Quick Reference for Play

Set-Up

1. Make a **realm sheet** together: decide where it is, answer three questions about it, pick **rent** and **bad stuff**, and write **targets** on each **action**.
2. Make your **worker sheets** together: decide who they are, answer four questions about them, and pick **compromises**.
3. Choose the first **lead player** and give them a symbol.

Play

1. A **season** is twelve weeks, three months for four weeks each, and each week has a **workweek** and a **weekend** phase.
2. In the **workweek**:
 1. All the players roll their dice.
 2. Each player in turn, starting with the **lead player**, assigns a die to an **action** and **tells the story** of what they do.
 3. When all dice have been assigned, the players check the totals on each **action** against the **target**. The **rent** so far is written down. Players apply bonus and penalty **conditions** depending on how well or badly they did. Then each player in turn **tells the story** of how they feel at the end of the week.
3. In the **weekend**:
 1. The **lead player** picks a random card and checks it against the **weekend diary**. They nominate one or more other players to **tell the story** on the card.
 2. Once the nominated players have told the story, any **conditions** described on the card are applied.
4. Every four weeks, the house checks how much **rent** it has placed so far in the **earning pool**. If the house is short on rent, any player can play a **compromise** to try and prevent **bad stuff** from happening. If all the players have run out of **compromises**, **bad stuff** happens and you play the **Ending Montage**.
5. After twelve weeks (three months), if the house has successfully avoided being short on rent, the **season** ends and you celebrate with a **House Party**.