



White Elephant Party Official Rulebook, 2020 Edition

Our theme this year is: “Stubbornly Persisting, Virtually.”

“Under the Company’s beneficent influence, our customs are now steeped in chance. [... A rumor], whispered by masked heresiarchs, says that the Company has never existed, and never will. Another, no less despicable, argues that it makes no difference whether one affirms or denies the reality of the shadowy corporation, because Babylon is nothing but an infinite game of chance.”

*Jorge Luis Borges, *The Lottery in Babylon**

1. **Pre-Swap.** Before the gift exchange starts, all players should have submitted a (possibly deceitful) description of their gift using the web form.
2. **Swapping Gifts.** Just before swapping begins, WEPEC will share a list of participants. We will proceed down the list in order. When it’s your turn, you may choose to pick an “unopened” gift or swap with someone else.
 - a. If you choose to swap, you may only swap with someone who has already opened a gift.
3. **Rules for Swapping.** Any time your gift is taken in a swap, you may choose to keep the swapped item or swap again with someone else. Several swaps can occur in a single turn. Swaps are subject to the following rules:
 - a. A gift stays with the fourth person who has possession of it; the gift cannot be swapped again. (For exceptions, see clauses 4(a) and 5.)
 - b. Each gift can only be swapped once per turn.
 - c. Each person can only be the target of one swap per turn.

4. **Retribution; Cruel and Unusual Gifts.** Terminal Players (TPs) are defined as players who are in possession of a gift that has been swapped the maximum number of times (see 3(a)). If a TP believes that their gift is particularly cruel and unusual, they may request a Terminal Tribunal Vote by other TPs.
 - a. If a majority of TPs vote that the gift is cruel and unusual, the person who brought the gift must take it back. The person who brought the gift also receives a Penalty (see 7).
 - i. No further swaps of that gift are allowed.
 - ii. The person who brought the gift continues to play as normal.*
 - b. If the TPs do not vote that the gift is cruel and unusual, the claimant receives a Penalty.
 - c. The Tribunal Vote may be postponed until there are at least 3 TPs.
 - d. If the swapping phase of the game ends without 3 TPs, additional TPs may be appointed by the chairman of WEPEC (see 6(b)).
5. **Application of Penalties.** Once all gifts have been exchanged, the game enters the Penalty Phase (see clause 7).
 - a. Non-Penalized Players (NPPs) are selected in numerical order. Each NPP can choose to give their gift to a Penalized Player (PP) who has received fewer than 2 Penalty Gifts. NPPs can give gifts even if they are the fourth owner of the gift.
 - b. NPPs are called until all PPs have received two Penalty Gifts.
 - c. No Terminal Tribunal Votes are allowed in the Penalty Phase.
6. **Dispute Arbitration.** In the event of disputes about the rules, conflicts will be arbitrated by the White Elephant Party Executive Committee (WEPEC).
 - a. Membership of WEPEC consists of 1 chairman and 0 other members.
 - b. Graham Spencer is the chairman of WEPEC.
 - c. Decisions made by WEPEC can be appealed to the White Elephant Party Appeals Board (WEPAB).
 - i. Membership of WEPAB consists of 1 chairman and 0 other members.
 - ii. Graham Spencer is the chairman of WEPAB.
 - iii. All decisions made by WEPAB are final.
7. **Penalties.** Penalties can be leveled by WEPEC for the following infractions:
 - a. Failing to send your gift to its recipient.
 - b. Providing an incorrect address to the sender.
 - c. Bringing a disallowed gift to the White Elephant Party. Disallowed gifts include but are not limited to:
 - i. Live animals.
 - ii. Dead animals.
 - iii. Bundling.†
 - d. Flagrant disregard for the rules of the White Elephant Party.
 - e. Failing to respect the institutions and traditions of the White Elephant Party.
 - i. The White Elephant Party Denim Vest With Wool Lining and the White Elephant Party Ascot are important traditions of the White Elephant Party.
 - f. Complaining about or disputing the rules of the White Elephant Party.
 - g. Other chastisements that WEPEC deems necessary to preserve the jovial and festive atmosphere of the White Elephant Party.

* In other words, they may receive other gifts.

† “Don’t just pile a bunch of different crappy things into a bag and call it a gift.”