White Elephant

The rules on one page

Players
4 or more, each bringing one wrapped gift

You need
1 wrapped gift for each player, a price limit, and the numbers 1 up to the number of players

Goal
Go home with a gift you like

Game ends
When every gift is open and player 1 has had the final swap

Before the party

1. Agree on a price limit when you invite people. $20 to $35 is typical.
2. Everyone brings one wrapped gift. Put them all on one table or under the tree.
3. Agree on the steal limit before the first gift is opened. 3 is usual.
4. Put the numbers 1 up to the number of players in a hat. Everyone draws one.

How to play

1. **Player 1 opens the first gift.** Pick any wrapped gift and open it where everyone can see. There is nothing to steal yet.
2. **Open or steal.** In number order, each player either opens a wrapped gift from the pile or steals an opened gift that is not frozen.
3. **Stolen from? Go again.** The player you steal from takes a turn right away: open a new gift or steal a different one, but not the gift just taken from them. The chain ends when someone opens a new gift.
4. **Frozen after 3 steals.** Count the steals on each gift. On its third steal a gift is frozen, and the player holding it keeps it.
5. **Player 1 gets the last move.** When every gift is open, player 1 may swap with any gift that is not frozen. The player who gives it up takes player 1's gift.

Stealing rules to settle first

Rule	The usual way	Other ways
Steal limit	Frozen after 3 steals	1 or 2 steals, or no limit
Stealing back	Not on the same turn	Later, if not frozen
When stolen from	Open or steal	Open a new gift only
Last move	Player 1 swaps once	One more round of steals for all

Other ways to play

Young children. Use a steal limit of 1, or no stealing at all.

Sight unseen. Gifts stay wrapped until the game is over.

Turn timer. In a big group, give each player 30 seconds to decide.

Best gift. Whoever brought the best gift gets an extra swap at the end.

End of the game

When every gift is open and player 1 has had the final swap, everyone keeps the gift they are holding.

Steal tracker

Gift	1st	2nd	3rd

Tick a box for each steal. On the third tick the gift is frozen.