

Whitehack 3rd edition Review - A Brief Review of a Brief and Elegant Game

Whitehack 3rd edition, by Christian Mehrstam has a retro feel. There's sturdy hardback, soft cover, and landscape formats, as well as a notepad version with 190 dotted line pages. At around 150 pages, the rules are uncluttered, carrying a few drawings in the style of Medieval prints. The bold aesthetic call back to simpler times fits the game perfectly.

The introduction gives plentiful good examples of play; character generation is clear, and can be very quick. The separation of class and character concept is novel and liberating. The classes are tool kits which serve the imagination rather than binding it.

The core rules are lean. There's enough D&D DNA in here to remind us where we are, combined with powerful and subtle design concepts that you wouldn't find in a straight retro-clone. We have player authorial control, bases, corruption, faction rules, crossing genres, campaign and adventure planning advice, and using random tables and 'modus' rolls to shape GM input rather than just dumb output.

These sharp, minimalist rules bring to life a conversation between referee and other players with the flavour of the oldest RPGs; they're versatile. Just add imagination.

If you want a game which answers all of the questions, Whitehack may not be for you. If your jam is building worlds as a group, and having effective, light rules which encourage creativity and player skill, then this concise game is a work of beauty.

250 words