*The Pale Beyond* is a game made by Bellular Studios released in 2023. The studio is very new and was founded in 2021. Bellular is one of the biggest *World of Warcraft* youtuber and that is why I think this game has become a very rapid success. With an audience of almost 1 million people your have easy marketing after all.

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To get everyone in the mood of this game I would like to start with the trailer.

Trailer

The game start with the player finding this pamphlet.

Crew wanted. Able-bodied crew wanted for dangerous expedition. Months of darkness. Low wages. Slim chance of safe return. GLORY TO BE HAD IN THE EVENT OF SUCCES.

The player then finds it’s way to Captain Hunt the leader of this expedition who holds and interview with the player. To see if they are worthy to be his first mate, which you of course are. A week later you set sail with the crew out towards the pale beyond, the cold cold south. However when you arrive there winter is approaching and the ocean freezes shut. You are stuck. This is where the game truly begins.

The game has overarching mechanics, the crew. Which you need to manage, keeping them happy and alive. You have 5 types of crew members. Sailors, your grunts who can’t do anything special as all crew is capable of doing a sailors job. You have scouts who you can send out to scout the area. Engineers who can keep the warmth of the camp going and the scientist who can do numerous different science activities. All these character are minor characters in the game. The important once are the specialists. These characters all have their own special role in the game and have a loyalty meter attached to them. More on that later.

In addition to the crew you also have resources to manage. You have 3 resources, Food, warmth and decorum. You also have your crew and dogs which could be seen as resources, but lets not talk about what is a resource here. So you have food, which is well food. Warmth which comes in the form of things you can burn, which can also be food. And lastly you have decorum. Decorum is the resource that quantifies the general mood within the crew. If your decorum reaches 0 your crew rip itself apart and you lose.

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The player character is Robin Shaw and I think they are amazing. Not because of the amazing backstory, personality, looks, etc. But in lieu of that Robin Shaw is amazing. Robin Shaw doesn’t have a backstory, they don’t have a personality, they don’t even have art. In fact there are only 3 know facts about Shaw. Their name Robin Shaw. Their work history, merchant, pirate or military. And lastly where they come from, born and raised on the sea, land or both. The rest is to be filled in be imagined by the player and through the building of relationships with the crew. When talking to the crew they will sometimes ask Shaw questions. Like “You’re not married, are you Shaw?” here the player can say yes, no or used to be, but with a bit more humanity. This will change the story and the players understanding of Shaw. Everyone’s Shaw is different. I think this is a beautiful way to let player identify fully with the character they portray and even place themselves fully in the shoes of Robin Shaw. Personally I wasn’t playing Robin Shaw I was playing myself. The high identification with Robin Shaw made the game truly enjoyable(This is in line with research by Hefner who found that identity increases enjoyment) and also increased the immersion of the game significantly.

I kept this slide purposely black. While coming up with this presentation I had a problem with what I wanted to talk about. This game has many affective moments to talk about, like a lot. But I don’t want to spoil the game. So I will be talking about this game from a more holistic point of view. Talking about the trans media affect it had on me. Because I think I didn’t just create an affective relationship with the game and its character, but I think it also changed some of my points of view on games and some aspects of the world. I will take you through my **affective journey** of playing this game.

First why did I even play this game. Normally I would not play a game like this at all. It’s a story driven crew management game which are both genres that elude my interest. I don’t like taking care of a crew and in most games if you control multiple characters I try to find a way to only play one character. And when I play a story driven game always attempt to be interested, but quickly I lose interest and start skipping cutscenes, text boxes, etc.

I started playing The Pale Beyond, not because I necessary was excited to play it. normally I wouldn’t touch these type of games with a 10ft pool.