

Vae Victis – Manual

Introduction

Vae Victis is, in many ways, a different game than *EU:Rome*, and several of the new features are not optional, but central to the gameplay. Players might feel slightly lost and bewildered as their great republic crumbles around them. This manual will explain the core mechanics of the expansion.

Dramatis Personae – the Characters

The characters are the elite of society; the most prominent members of the wealthiest and most prestigious families. As such, you are mostly stuck with the characters you have, although you will sometimes wish you could simply bring in some farm hand to be your Grand Vizier or Praetor. However, if the game detects that you have too few characters to fill all offices, you will receive some random new ones.

The most important role of the characters is to perform official functions, like being a minister, magistrate or general. Most jobs have certain requirements, such as an age limit. These requirements are shown as tooltips over the character portraits in the interface wherever you can assign a character to a certain job. If your country is a republic, these requirements are harsher, since characters are expected to climb the career ladder before they get to the top.

Your characters can be perused in the Character View, and, in greater detail, by clicking the little question mark in the lower right corner of their portrait. (The tooltip over the question mark or portrait also contains a lot of information.) In the Character View or Dynastic View, you will notice a wealth of information about each character, as well as buttons you can click to take action against the character.

Character Attributes

Loyalty

Loyalty is without a doubt the most important character attribute. It should be seen as loyalty towards the current ruler and, if you play a republic, the ruling party. When characters grow disloyal, they will start plotting the downfall of the current regime. This is dangerous if a character holds an important office, especially if they are governors or generals! *Character disloyalty is the chief cause of Civil Wars* (see below)!

Managing loyalty is hard, but something you will need to do lest your hard-won empire fall apart. The key factors that influence a character's loyalty are: popularity of the ruler, personality traits (**ambitious**, **assertive**, etc), current ambition, and the number of cohorts and ships that are personally loyal to the character. The tooltip for character loyalty will show the exact factors currently in effect. Characters that are losing loyalty fast should be kept from all offices. Keep an eye on your generals and governors, and replace them if they have too many loyal cohorts or before they become hopelessly disloyal. This means you will often have to make painful decisions. For example, dare you use your best general even if that means his troops will become loyal to him? Shrewd

players will let the ruler command the main army when possible, and rotate the other generals as needed. Also consider using old or unhealthy characters as generals.

Another word of caution; very disloyal characters might not accept being dismissed from their job, flat out refusing, or even starting a civil war. Preempt this by dismissing them before their loyalty goes below 50.

In non-republics, the death of the ruler will drastically alter the loyalty of all characters in the country, since many of their old reasons for being loyal or disloyal dies with the monarch.

Popularity

Popularity represents the support a character has from the citizens and free men of the country, as well as from other characters. Unpopular rulers will start losing the loyalty of their characters. Popularity is also important on elections in republics, where it will influence the outcome to a significant degree. Similarly, in monarchies, the popularity of characters in the line of succession can cause other characters to prefer or scorn them as ruler candidates. Even quite loyal councilors can prefer someone else if the heir apparent is wildly unpopular...

Popularity is mainly affected by the following factors: winning or losing battles, character events, and character charisma. Uncharismatic rulers had better win some battles! Note that rulers are especially vulnerable, since many events and modifiers specifically alter ruler popularity.

Prominence

Prominence represents the amount of attention and fame a character enjoys. Holding a title will give a good boost to prominence. This attribute is not critical, since its main function is to ensure that prominent characters marry and have children that the game keeps track of. However, some events may trigger off prominence, and it does have an effect on succession in monarchies if there is no legitimate heir.

Ambitions

In *Vae Victis*, characters have actual desires and ambitions. Some are not in the player's power to grant, like "Have a Son"; but most can be fulfilled directly – which will give a hefty boost to character loyalty. Watch out for characters who want to become rulers, especially if you run a monarchy!

Faction Affiliation

In republics, every adult character is affiliated with one of the five political factions. Their political leanings will influence what kind events that will happen to them, and more importantly, their chances of becoming ruler (depending on which faction is biggest in the senate.) Note: the 99 senators in the senate do not directly correspond to your characters.

The initial faction affiliation is semi-random and determined during childhood, but some things can change it at a later stage. If a character has the ambition to gain a title or job, fulfilling that ambition will alter his political conviction. If it is a military job, he will tend towards the military party, if he had the ambition to become a governor, he will gain mercantile conviction, etc. Other types of ambitions can also change a character's

conviction slightly, such as having a son (which will lead to them thanking the gods, i.e. religious conviction.) Characters that have no title but desire one will slowly shift towards the Populist faction.

Character Actions

There will be times when you want give a character a carrot, or possibly beat them with a big stick. Either works. The little buttons in the Character View and above the large portrait in the Dynastic View will let you take direct action against your characters.

Grant Title

This will let you assign minor titles to the character, giving a one-time boost to loyalty and an effect on their prominence. You don't have an infinite number of these minor titles to hand out, so you may want to reserve them for characters that are not beyond hope of salvaging.

Bribe

Another way of improving character loyalty is by simply giving them money and telling them to be happy. It is rather expensive, so it is more of a stop gap measure. For example, a very disloyal general might refuse to even give up his command. Bribe him, grant him a minor title or two, and then get rid of him!

Hold Triumph

This is the final positive character action, and is only possible for triumphant generals or admirals. It does not cost much, and gives a huge boost to loyalty. However, it can not be done very often (one-year interval), and it requires the general to have won a battle in the last 12 months.

Smear Reputation

This action is mostly useful if you notice that an undesirable character is a likely ruler candidate in the next election (republics), or the preferred heir for one or more councilors. Hurting his popularity is a possible solution.

Imprison

When nothing else works, you can throw a character in the dungeon and forget about him. Imprisoned characters lose their ambition and no longer play a part in the politics of your country. Nor can they have more children. However, every time you imprison a character, your **Tyranny** will increase, which will affect the popularity of your ruler and lower the loyalty of all characters. Moreover, you might alienate characters who care about the victim, such as his friends, family and fellow faction members. Lastly, the characters you might want gone the most, such as ruler candidates, might not go quietly, but may start a civil war at once!

Release

You can, of course, pardon imprisoned characters, which might be useful after the end of a civil war, or when the old ruler has died, causing their loyalty to change.

Banish

Exile is an alternative to imprisonment, but carries the same risks. The character will end up in another country, where he or she might find a new career.

Assassinate

This works in the same way as the corresponding diplomatic action you can take against foreign characters. It is a chancy proposition, but does not carry the attendant risks of sparking a civil war or increasing tyranny.

Execute

If you have succeeded in imprisoning a character, you can proceed with an execution, guaranteed to succeed unlike assassinations. However, the effect on tyranny is large.

Civil Wars

Vae Victis attempts to simulate the internal strife that caused the civil wars that plagued the great nations of the time, from Alexander's successor states to Imperial Rome. Maintaining a stable empire is a lot harder than in the basic game. There are several different types of civil wars. All of them except for a succession crisis are more likely if your stability is low and less likely if your stability is high. However, this only means that you have less or more time to avoid it once you get the alert. If you do nothing, it is bound to happen, eventually.

Succession Crisis

In monarchies, the nine members of your Council will each have a preference for who should be the next king. If enough councilors support someone other than the Heir Apparent, they might attempt a civil war when the current ruler dies. Try to avoid having more than one councilor prefer another heir than the Heir Apparent.

Usurper Civil War

This is a variation of the Succession Crisis, which can occur if a majority of your councilors would rather see another candidate become king, and are inclined to jump the gun rather than wait for the king to die. While you will have plenty of warning before this happens, it can still be tricky to avoid if your ruler is terribly unpopular.

“Regular” Civil War

There is a risk, when attempting to dismiss, imprison or banish disloyal and powerful characters, that they will have the will and the backing to start a civil war. Republics do not suffer from this problem to the same degree, since it is always safe to dismiss a character from their job once their term is up. (In monarchies, characters expect to hold all jobs for life.) If their term is not up, it is always best to raise character loyalty above 50 before attempting to dismiss them.

Disloyal General Seizes the Day

Generals can start a civil war at any time once their loyalty is low enough. To make matters worse, they will refuse to give up their command, and are very hard to assassinate successfully. If a general starts a civil war, he will take his army with him, which can make this type of civil war particularly nasty.

Disloyal Governor Attempts Secession

Governors do not start civil wars per se; they secede from the country with the region they govern. Usually, this results in a special type of state, named after its culture and region (e.g. Greek Cilicia.) This secessionist state starts at war with the mother country, and can be annexed in its entirety in the peace treaty, no matter how many provinces it owns.

Populist Civil War

This final type of civil war can only occur in republics. It can only happen when the populist faction holds an absolute majority in the senate but the ruler is from another faction. Like the corresponding Usurper Civil War for monarchies, it will result in a complete divide among your characters. Many (especially populists) will join the rebels, taking their armies, fleets or provinces with them. By ensuring that the populist faction remains weak, this type of civil war can easily be avoided.

The Republican Game

Playing republics is more complex than playing monarchies or tribal states, but not necessarily harder; monarchies have far more problems with civil wars, due to disloyal councilors, pretenders and not being able to safely dismiss any character from their jobs if they are disloyal.

The Senate

The balance of power in the senate has three key functions:

- It affects who becomes the next Consul, which is important since the country gets a distinct and powerful bonus depending on the faction of the Consul.
- It affects what types of diplomacy can be performed.
- It affects what kinds of missions and events that happen.

The size of the factions in the senate can be altered by the player indirectly, by keeping an eye on the tooltip for the senate in the Government View, which shows all the factors currently contributing to the political winds. In short, the charisma of your magistrates (technology heads) and of the two Censors will strengthen their respective factions. Other factors include war exhaustion, lack of slaves, lack of trade and lack of an Omen.

Cursus Honorum

In republics, most offices are time limited, and characters expect to move up to more prestigious offices once their term is up. The main advantage with this system is that disloyal characters can be safely dismissed, but on the other hand, failure to rotate out

characters who have been in office for too long will result in the senate arranging replacements who are not always ideal for the job. Furthermore, only Consuls and previous holders of high office are allowed to command armies and fleets, which might limit your options.

Diplomacy under the Senate

The senate will either approve or block any given diplomatic action, depending on the opinions and relative power of the five factions. Sometimes, the player can still force through a decision, which is marked with a yellow symbol left of the button. However, the Consul will lose some popularity from this. As a rule of thumb, the military faction will approve of declarations of war and oppose poor peace treaties, the mercantile faction will approve of more trade, the religious faction will want good relations with brothers of the faith, the civic faction likes countries of the same culture, and the populists are opposed to almost everything except peace.

The Monarchy Game

Monarchies are all about keeping characters loyal, or at least, keeping disloyal characters away from all offices. The biggest concern is to ensure that your councilors remain loyal to the Heir Apparent.

The Council

Instead of a senate, monarchies have a council. Each councilor gives powerful bonuses to the country, depending on their skills. However, it is not always prudent to assign your most skilled characters to office since they might be disloyal or predisposed towards disloyalty.

Once a character holds a spot in the council, he can start getting special ambitions instead of the regular ones. These represent the direction he thinks the whole country should take, for example war or alliance with one of the neighboring countries. Players do not need to worry overly much about this advice, but be aware that fulfilling them will greatly increase the loyalty of the councilor, whereas neglecting them will constantly decrease his loyalty slightly.

Preferred Heirs

All characters in a monarchy have a preference for who they think should be the next king. This is known to the player (visible in the government screen and the character tooltip.) The preference is affected by a number of factors:

- Legality, i.e. who has the strongest claim to the throne. If the king has no close relative who can succeed him, this factor becomes less important and the risk of varying preferred heirs among your characters increases.
- Loyalty. If a character is loyal, he or she is likely to prefer the legal heir and close relatives to the current ruler. Disloyal characters would like a change in dynasty (if they are not of the ruling dynasty themselves.)
- Popularity. Unpopular characters will suffer a penalty and vice versa.
- Friendships and rivalries. Characters will prefer friends and scorn rivals.

- Selfishness. Characters will, of course, prefer themselves if they have a relatively strong legal claim.
- Bigotry. Characters do not like children, females and foreigners much...

The preference of heir only matters for your councilors, since other characters have no real say in the matter. However, councilors who prefer heirs other than the Heir Apparent are dangerous due to the risk of civil war, and should be replaced or bribed. Shrewd players should attempt to get rid of popular pretenders.

Intrigue

Monarchies have a number of special events that can throw the line of succession into disarray. Councilors, pretenders, and even the mothers of pretenders can attempt to assassinate people who are ahead in the line of succession. This is largely beyond player control, but it might be worth keeping an eye on the traits of the second and third in line for the throne. Deceitful and corrupt pretenders are more likely to cause trouble...

Tribal Game

Tribes are the least complicated type of government. They work much like monarchies, but instead of a council they have a number of clan chiefs. The clan chiefs are the heads of the most important families, or clans, in the country, and like councilors they will get special ambitions concerning the whole country. However, there is less risk of civil war, since the clan chiefs are not overly concerned with the succession. In tribal states, succession is not hereditary, but rather tends to rotate between the major clans.

Even so, generals and governors can still start civil wars, just like in republics and monarchies.