

I. The Nine Spears.

Ravarr and Thorn's original Striding was a group of ten, and every one of them owned a spear. Thorn asked his nine companions for their counsel. They gathered in a circle around him and one by one gave their advice. These nine rules are therefore known as the Nine Spears. Legend says that Thorn, before he sacrificed himself to combat the Vallorn, allowed everyone who would follow these rules to carry his name. This is why those sworn to battle are called Thorns among the Ravarr people, and these are their rules:

1. Be virtuos in every deed.

A Thorn is always prepared. This includes knowing oneself as well as preparing for death. To ensure a short time until the next rebirth, being virtuos is not a religious but also a practical requirement.

2. Always be prepared for battle.

Surprise is considered the biggest asset of Ravarr tactics, and their lives in the wilderness require constant attention to threads. This rule is about vigilance, about keeping equipment in good order but also about staying fit for battle. Ravarr tend not to leave their weapons behind, not even for sleeping or washing.

3. Never betray your Striding or Steading. Serve the Empire.

A Thorn's steading or striding is her family; practicality commands that her loyalties lie first and foremost with them. However, the service to the Empire is what a Thorn and all Ravarr are really dedicated to, and this will require sacrifices.

An older version of this says: Never betray your Striding or Steading. Combat the Vallorn.

4. You cannot betray your enemies.

The Ravarr are fierce in battle; they don't let sentiment get in the way of finding practical solutions to their problems. Pragmatism is highly regarded in a Thorn.

5. Paint yourself before the battle: Teach others how to defend themselves. (Ravarr's advice)

This were the words of Thorn's lover, Ravarr. With preparedness being central to Ravarr military doctrine, training others is a natural part of being a Thorn. Even Ravarr children own wooden weapons and know where their place is when the striding is attacked. Thorns are the eminent teachers of battle tactics and fighting among the Ravarr people. The warpaint that every Ravarr dons before fighting is a sign of her preparedness and training for the conflict.

6. Protect those that cannot protect themselves.

A Thorn is the living shield for those unable to defend themselves. While flight is a perfectly acceptable option in many situations, leaving the old and weak behind is not a Ravarr tactic.

7. Think before you attack. (Known as the Vallorn's teaching)

The Vallorn grows bigger and angrier when it is attacked without its Trods being walked enough. A Ravarr Thorn has to recognize the right time for a fight, and while her attack will be stopped by nothing once launched, she will actively seek to decide the moment instead of being tempted into a battle with bad odds. It is not coincidence that many popular Ravarr tactics - surprise, ambush, skirmish and traps - are about timing.

8. Be longanimous against those that are under you.

While many Thorns are fierce, aggressive warriors, disproportionate punishments and blind anger towards subordinates are seen as a bad character among the Ravarr. A bad leader will soon have no one to command.

9. Give more than you take.

The life of a Thorn is a life of receiving as the permanent commitment to battle dictates. A Ravarr Thorn will often rely on her peers for food and healing. There is no weakness in this, as self-support in a time of war would be impractical. A Thorn repays her debt to the community in blood, as her place is at the front of a battleline, as a part of Thornborn, defying the Vallorn and the barbarians for the Empire. Repaying what she has been supported with, however, is not enough. A life of dedication must necessarily be a life of giving.