

JULY 2021 HARRY POTTER EC: INTERNATIONAL FLAG

Dear Diary,

It is sort of inevitable now that the world forgets us sea-sailing folks. We glide gracefully across the strong waters, the seas bending to our command. The waves we make friends with, and rip currents our enemies. In our voyage to nowhere we learn that the waters have more than two moods, and we live vicariously through vehement winds and soothing breezes.

Yet once in every while we dock our wooden homes at shore, and wander into the lands of our many other magical communities. Though we yearn to feel the soft drift of the sea, we ground our anchor and see the world beyond the waters, and learn to catch up in their ways. After all, though we are a tight family, a group of magical wizards and witches under one flag, but there are many more out there on land. And what better way to integrate into common society than the 429th Quidditch World Cup?

We have been to precisely two cups before- one when that scrawny Bulgarian Viktor Krum caught that luminous golden snitch right off the ground (I am still awestruck), and yet lost to the triumphant Leprechauns, and the other I can't quite remember since I was only still a child, but my parents told me the British won. We seafaring folks love the Quidditch matches- they are always so enthralling and fast-paced, it was like watching a typhoon wreak havoc on an island! The players twist this way and the other, their flight truly magical. They make flying look easy, catching and tossing the quaffle swifter than a seagull snatching away a snack.

Mama says that flying and sailing is not so different, and I suppose she is right. There is that same rush, that same blissful wind blowing at your faces.

When I and the other young'uns were told that we were going to dock and go to the Quidditch match last week, we practically destroyed the mess hall in excitement. Now we are banned from lunch and limited to a pint of ale per week, but that doesn't matter, we are really good at stealing anyways- the grown ups always leave the ale out in the open.

Also this time, we are more prepared. I remembered last time how there were many flags of different nationalities portrayed prominently in front of tents, even the ones that were not playing in the matches, and I practically begged mama to let us bring our flags. At first, the elders were hesitant, afraid it might give away some valuable secrets that we so carefully treasured. But after a lot of convincing, and a crap ton of promises that we wouldn't disclose our history to anyone, even if it was a little brown-curly infant, the elders grudgingly allowed us to bring out our flags.

I am thrilled, because the first thing we learn after dredging and whaling is the history of our flag. It is such a beautiful and magnificent thing, such a well thought out design that I am saddened that the world doesn't know about it. I spent the past few weeks looking for loopholes to the rule that I was not allowed to tell anyone, but I couldn't find any. Shame, it's such an amazing flag though.

So many people have come to ask us about our flag over the past few days. Pretty girls in short Korean skirts and long navy blue blazers, curious children with their large brown eyes, and old and greying grandmas have all asked us what the flag was about. I was so tempted to tell them, to blurt out everything I knew about it, but one look from papa and I resigned myself to “It’s the sea-faring folk flag”.

Since I can’t tell any person about this, I suppose I can tell you my diary, since you’re only an inanimate object that holds my ramblings and ravings. You can be trusted, because you will tell no one, and even if this ends up in the hands of a land-folker, you will immediately burn into ashes, the hot orange-red flames erasing away any record of the sea-faring folk history, the trusty winds scattering the fragments far away from one another, and burying them in the moist soil below, completely and utterly unreadable.

It’s a pretty darn good curse I have put on this book I must say. Mama would be proud if she knew.



Looks complicated? Yeah I thought so. It is a tad bit more complex than your average national flags. I think I will explain it to you. After all, as mama always says, a rich sails holds rich history, and rich history is always best flown with pride. To have it all appear on such a miniscule canvas is truly a wonder. Only the most skilled artisan of the waves can brave such a tremendous feat.

The most explainable is the two blue hues that adorn the flag. They symbolise the waters (of course), the home and the heart of us sea-faring folks. The lighter blue at the bottom of the flag symbolises the base of us sea-faring folk. Without the waters, we are no one. Without the seas below our wooden hulls, we are just like every other human in the world-land-dwellers. The hum of the sea, the dance of the fishes, the playful yawn of the sharks, they are all the base of our identity. We are like the wind on the waves, everchanging and

aging, but the seas will always be our home. It will always be who we are, and nothing could ever change that.

The darker blue on the right hand side is where most of us young'uns generally scratch out heads. If there's already one blue that symbolises the sea, then what is the other? The truth is that where the seas are the light of our lives, the shimmer can also fade, and what could be home could be our devastation and destruction. One typhoon, one rip current, one raging storm could rip our hearts into pieces, and drain the lives out of us. It is a reminder that whilst we are sea-faring folk, the sea doesn't find home in us. They are almighty, all-knowing, and vast- their depths and breadths truly beyond us. We are nothing to the seas. We are only braving it. It is a reminder that just because we spear fish and sit at the top of civilisation, we are nothing compared to nature themselves. We are at the mercy of the sea.

The tiny strip of dark blue in the middle of the white and yellow points to not the darkness of the sea, but the darkness of ourselves. Because whilst the sea has two sides, so do humans. It was truly the Dark Ages for us sea-faring folk. In the year 1800, some witches and wizards from another clan on the sea used magic to try and make exploitation as pirates much easier. Just a quick ol' Avada Kedavra and boom! They had the ships. That was the worst of the times, and much infighting between the different clans of the sea-faring folk on the seas ensued. In 1809, they finally stopped, but not before a bloody and brutal Battle of the Wood. It was named so because witches and wizards began scraping wood from the ships of their conquered instead of using them. The colour is a reminder of what we can become if we let ourselves believe we are the seas, and others, just mere fishes.

The yellow and orange both symbolise the lands, and the three black stripes being the bridge to connect the seas to the lands. Why are there two colours for land you might ask? As you can see, the yellow one connects to the dark seas, but the orange doesn't. This is because the yellow pays homage to the lands that had been wrought with destruction by the strong and unpredictable seas. Mama always says- no matter how much we are grateful to the seas for giving us a home, the waters has one too many washed away the homes of people who had no reason to die. And that's why some clans like mine use magic to predict when the seas get upset and we do our best to inform and evacuate the peoples as much as possible. It is our duty as sea-faring folk to protect the innocent people from waters that deserve no right to wreak havoc on their lives.

The orange on the other hand has a peaceful hue to it, reminding us of calmer days. Sunsets alongside beaches, hand-in-hand with the one you love, the seas can comfort you too. They caress you, tickle you, splash you with its cool waves, your fear and agony washed away by its benevolent winds. As much as the sea is a frightful entity, it is also one land people can love, and as sea-faring folk, we must always acknowledge both.

Now might you take a guess what the white contraption in the middle is? Quite funnily enough, it is meant to be a ship! No one sees the resemblance on our ship, but no one grumbles about it either. Apparently it's because no one wanted to incur the wrath of the artisan who made this flag, and to criticise it was to criticise him. So we just keep quiet and giggle behind our hands at the world's most 'abstract art' ship in existence.

There are two normal looking stars and one odd one, and this is supposed to be a reminder that no matter what, we are still humans, even though we see the stars on the skies differently. Land dwellers look at the heavens above as if they were an aesthetic; us sea-faring folk use it as our guide. We see the same constellations against the same black canvas, but we perceive it differently because of our experiences, thus the weird-looking stars. Regardless, no matter how far we sail into the night, we are still under the same stars as land folks. (Of course the artisan who made this was quite clear to capture the essence of our elders superiority with laurel wreath- it's clear the artisan and the elders of our ship think that just because we see stars as guides, we are better than the land folks though Mama and I disagree.)

Finally, we have this giant red triangle thing on the side of the flag, and if I am being very honest, no one actually knows what it is. We have tried again and again to coax the artisan to tell what it was, but all he said was that when he died, we all will know. Of course that meant we had to stop a couple of assassination attempts, but I cannot lie, I am rather curious. I have made a couple of speculations myself- maybe it meant onward? Move forward regardless of the bloodshed? Well, I have no idea. Do you have a guess? It still puzzles me and I hate not knowing but I still wish the artisan a long life (please don't die after me I need to know).

Well that's about it. Oh, it is time for the 429th Quidditch Match! I suppose I will get going. It was nice unloading all that history out on you, since I cannot speak about this to anyone. I hope the sea faring folk secret is safe with you!

Now onwards to the match ahead! I can already feel the thrill of the winds on my face!!