When Harry came to, he was blinded by the Sun shining in through a window. He held up a hand to block the light and determine his surroundings. He was in a stone room with rather primitive furnishings. The bed on which he lay held no blankets or pillows. Nearby, a woman sat in a wooden chair, looking over a book. She looked remarkably familiar, but he did not know from where he remembered her from.

Hearing his movements, the woman looked up. “Oh good, you are awake.” She said, laying the book to the side. “Are you feeling better?”

Taking stock of himself, Harry said, “I feel fine. Was I in bad condition?” He didn’t know where he was, nor how long he’d been there. He remembered the veil, but everything since was a blur.

“When we found you, you seemed to have hit your head.” The woman replied. “We saw no bumps or bruises that you hadn’t had for a while. As far as we can tell, you are uninjured. Can you tell me what happened?”

'Probably best not to mention sneaking into the ministry,' Harry thought. “I uhh. I got waylaid while trying to apparate,” he replied rather lamely. She didn't seem to be buying it.

“You spoke to us a few times over the past few days,” The lady said. She reminded Harry of Professor Sprout; kindly but not one to take well to being lied to. “You may have bumped your head on landing. You told us you had gone to Hogwarts, which we know to be impossible.”

“I did go to Hogwarts,” Harry protested. “I was in Gryffindor. I was captain of the quidditch team.”

The woman adopted a look between sympathy and confusion. “I'm afraid those terms mean nothing to me. And in any case, the school does not open for another few months. It's not possible for you to study here.”

“Here?” Harry asked. “We're at Hogwarts now?” Harry stood, ignoring the kindly woman's protests and hobbled to the window. The sight that greeted him was almost familiar. From where he stood, he could see the Black Lake, the forest, and the mountains in the distance. It was as if someone had painted the Hogwarts landscape from memory. The mountains looked more or less the same, but the forest was different, not as dense. The trees were shorter and it didn't have the ominous feeling he was used to. The lake also seemed cleaner, and somewhat smaller.

“What are the chances I'm hallucinating?” Harry asked in a higher-pitched voice than normal. This was surreal. “Or that this is some joke.”

“I see nothing funny about this situation,” The lady said. “And I have no reason, besides yours, to believe you are hallucinating.”

“So...” Harry desperately hoped his theory was incorrect. “I really am back in time... To the founding of Hogwarts.”

“I am not sure about traveling in time,” the woman said. “I find that to be very unlikely.” Harry began to relax a little. “But you are at the founding of Hogwarts.”

With a groan, Harry sat back on the bed. How the hell was he going to get home?

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It seemed like hours later when two others entered. Both he recognized from statues he had seen, though one of the statues was quite a bit larger. Salazar Slytherin and Rowena Ravenclaw. He was still hardly able to believe he was in the room with Helga Hufflepuff for several hours. It was like meeting Merlin. Wait, when did Merlin go to Hogwarts?

The two looked at him, curiously. His clothes to his haircut were literally from another time. Though he had spent the last two hours speaking with Helga Hufflepuff, it came as a shock to see them. These were three individuals Harry had read about in his history books. Numerous times over the years, Hermione would lecture him and Ron on the Hogwarts Founders. Whether it was how the location of the school came to be or the myths and legends surrounding the four, the founding of Hogwarts was one of Hermione’s favorite subjects.

“Hello,” Rowena Ravenclaw said. “I trust you are feeling better? You have been unconscious for days.”

“Much better,” Harry said, his mind a bit hazy. “Although I feel a bit overwhelmed.”

“Overwhelmed by what?” Ravenclaw asked as a house-elf bounced in with a tray. Four bowls of stew were handed out, one to each person in the room.

“Harry believes he is from another time,” Hufflepuff said. “A time some hundreds of years in the future.”

Slytherin raised an eyebrow at Harry as Harry looked down at his stew. “Interesting,” Salazar said. “You’re the second one since we got here.”

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“How are our names on this?” Hermione asked as she and Ron examined the book. “It looks really old. I don’t know if Harry knows how to age parchment with magic.”

“Maybe he does,” Ron said, leaning over the desk, wondering if he had been dragged out of bed at two in the morning for some sort of prank. “Remind me to knock him in the head next time we see him.”

Hermione rolled her eyes at Ron’s antics and opened the book. The binding gave a creak and dust fell off in a plume and she had to fight to not start coughing. Unsure of what to expect, she turned to the first page.

*I know this is going to be difficult to believe. I’m still not entirely sure I believe it myself. You see, I got myself thrown back in time. And not like with the time turner in our third year. I’m at Hogwarts. To be more specific, I’m at Hogwarts before the school even opened. According to Helga, the school will be opened for the first time in just a few months.*

*Let me start at the beginning. About a week ago, I started sneaking into the ministry to study the veil that Sirius fell into. I was actually there every night trying to figure it out, trying to see if I could get Sirius back. Well, I got stupid and got sucked in.*

*I was unconscious for a few days and when I woke up, I discovered that Helga Hufflepuff had been treating me. They could find nothing wrong with me and couldn’t figure out why I didn’t wake for so long. I then had lunch with three of the founders of Hogwarts. Helga, Rowena, Salazar, and I sat down to bowls of stew.*

*I know you would love to have been here for that, Hermione. The power in the room was like if there were three versions of Albus Dumbledore in the room.*

*Helga and Rowena are uncertain of me. They don’t know if they believe that I’m really from the future. Salazar does, though. Apparently he’s met someone before that claimed to have time traveled.*

*Sirius is here somewhere. Apparently just after they started building, a man appeared on the grounds, lost and confused. Helga and Rowena said he was touched in the head. Well, maybe they are right a little bit. Salazar gave him the benefit of the doubt and listened. Sirius went off in search of a way to go back to our time.*

*I was going to do the same, but he’s out there somewhere. I was studying the veil to get him back, so that’s what I’m going to do. Even if there’s no way back, I still need to find him.*

*I don’t know how long I may be stuck in the past, but I asked for this journal in case I can’t go back later. I have no idea where I might leave it or how you’ll find it, later. I can’t come to a pivotal point in wizarding history and not tell you about it, Hermione. I think you would probably kill me if I did.*

Hermione and Ron sat in stunned silence. Back in time? To the time of the founders? Harry had played some jokes on them in the past, but never to this level. Never this intricate. And there was no chance he would use Sirius as part of a prank like that.

As Hermione’s mind was reeling, Ron spoke up. “If this is real, and I’m not saying it is, then it happened in the last few hours. He was at my Quidditch practice yesterday.”

“But how could it have happened?” Hermione asked. “Mass time travel is impossible. He couldn’t have gone back!”

“Hermione,” Ron paused. “What about that?” Ron pointed to the painting that now most certainly was Ron. “Harry only just started painting. He’s not that good.”

Hermione still didn’t want to believe it. Not only would that blow a hole in her world views, as if THAT hadn’t happened before, but it would also mean that they had likely lost Harry for good. “It can’t be true, Ron.” Tears were starting to well up at the sides of her eyes. “How could he just leave us behind? How could he just leave Ginny?”

“I dunno,” Ron said, pulling up another chair. “I know he probably wouldn’t have just abandoned us on purpose. If he knew something was going to happen, he would have come to say goodbye, first. He wouldn’t just vanish without telling us.” Ron tried hard not to remember when Harry had done just that in the final battle against Voldemort. No, Harry wouldn’t do that. Would he?

Hermione looked to be in a daze. “I think we should wait a bit before we continue reading,” She said. “I need time to take all this in.”

“Alright,” Ron said, moving his chair closer and wrapping an arm around her.

It was an hour later when Ron stood to explore the rest of what they assumed had been Harry’s office. Wondering who was in the other paintings, Ron cast a charm to remove the dust. There was the painting of Ron, one of Hermione and one of them together. There were others of figures Ron recognized, such as the founders, Ginny, Neville, Fred and George, and Luna. It was odd seeing thousand-year-old paintings of himself and his friends.

A door to one side led to a bedroom that held a large four-poster bed and what looked to be a personal library. There was also an easel with an unfinished painting. It was of Hogwarts. The detail in it amazed even Ron, who knew nothing about painting. There were several areas missing that Ron assumed hadn’t been built until later, such as the greenhouses and the boathouse. The sky was not filled in, but Ron could see that Hogwarts as Harry had seen it was still there. This must have been the first-ever painting of Hogwarts. In the bottom corner was the words “Hogwarts 1083.”