

The Covenant of Magna Carta

Comes a moment when we can no longer go on as if we know who we are and where we came from;
Time when we must take true account of ourselves and those who have gone before us;
Put into words that which we burningly believe in and that for which we are untiringly willing to
stand up and fight.

For there are too many ways people of good conscience can deceive themselves,
and there are too many ways such people can be deceived,
And 'tis a bitter truth that such deception invariably proceeds from sound assumptions and benign attitudes,
The best of intentions have ever been our undoing.

That is why we, the men and women who form the body of students known as Magna Carta,
We who judge each other to be men and women of good conscience
(For no one can judge this for themselves)

We who follow in the traditions of decades, walk through these hallways that were birthed when this, our country, was young,
Who touch these walls once touched by academics now long gone and forgotten, lost in the gathering mists of time,
Who can glimpse the once and future student only in fleeting, elusive epiphanies and half-imagined moments of preternatural insight,
Seeing twoscore years into the past and catching sight of the fashions of yesteryear,
We who hear the echoes of departed students, those who once stood and loved where we now stand and love,
And we who in our dreams observe the moment far into the future when the two young lovers yet to be born will desperately
embrace in front of this classroom door so known to us and our kind,
Must as much for ourselves as our posterity now commit our purpose to paper and define our spirit and our dream, and give final
form to our dearest desires and our purest hopes,
We must raise our eyes from the tripping ground, and take brave and beautiful flight.

We are indeed all of us down in the gutter, but some of us need to look at the stars,
Or forever give in to the wearying effect of this world that has so little patience for those who will not do what they so well know to
be the right thing,
And never hesitate to do that thing, lest you choose to stop busying yourself with being born and start busying yourself with dying,
For what is death if not the flickering away of passion, the draining away of the very thing that makes your heart beat faster?

The path we must now start upon will not be easy,
As it never can be.
'Twill be marked by honest tears, great hardship, and not a little adversity,
As it should be. For ours in time will also be an equal measure of laughter and joy,
Whatever lies ahead of us, we must brave.

For the days ahead of us will give our brief existence on this campus its only meaning, and determine whether those who follow us will toast us with fond praise when we are no more—or remember us with but indifferent, forgetful shrugs.

And we cannot fear being hurt in this,

For we must feel the bitter burning of our tears to truly know the burning fires of our passions.

We must now choose to start Living the way we always wanted to live but never before this day knew how,

Or forever turn our backs on these ideals we, all of us, hold in our hearts, the noble things that once flung our kind to walk among the stars.

The choice was made the moment it was given.

Now we must act on it, now and always,

Or go back to stumbling in the dark, in the end to fall into our graves with heavy and burdened hearts,

Only once having glimpsed this guiding star, this evening star we now and only now have the opportunity to follow, yet having chosen to abandon the star-quest for the difficulty it promised.

So the dusts of indecision fall away, and the star lights down the path ahead of us.

We see the horizon for the first time as the field of infinite choices that it always was,

And we feel the full force of the wind on our backs,

It is the rightness of our decision revealing itself to us.

We now know what we always suspected:

That rules were never enough to define anyone, as our rules never defined any of us,

Necessary though they were,

How we went this far on determination alone, and though determination serve a good cause well,

We never knew what ours was.

A multitude of ill-fitting ideas came together, and amounted to nothing.

Those days are gone, now. Today we have gained a purpose beyond following rules.

Once our kindred rushed through their allotted time in this university like guests late from something—they never knew what, as we knew not. No longer.

Now is the time to rid ourselves of all those empty traditions that we observed only out of habit,

For such things still exist—because we never before saw them for what they truly were—until now.

Time to stop chattering our lives away, and start talking,

And remain silent when words are unnecessary,

To stop coming together only in formal meetings and in spiritless communication,

And start thirstily meeting the people and the world around us in full communion.

For the campus is our roaming ground for the days now at hand.

In the name of those who went before us,

We resolve never to give up on becoming something better than we are,

Something nobler, perhaps, and wiser, and more real.

Let us care enough to live up to this, our destiny,

And know that we have done right by our fellow student—be they friend to us, or stranger.

We only need to see what must be done and then have it be done.

And tho' in the end we shall leave this place in the care of others,

And tho' our parting that day be bitter as it will be sweet,

We agree to pass on and entrust this covenant to those who come after us,

Knowing how profoundly we did live and love and care to the last,

And knowing that that day the cycle is not closing, but starting anew,

The players changing, the stage resetting itself for all

the mornings and nightfalls ahead of us, and them.

These words, the truths and the meanings herein

Shall now and for all time be known as

The Shared and True Covenant of Our Kind:

The Covenant of Magna Carta.

"The Covenant of Magna Carta" as first put to words by Simo Sakari Aaltonen (2000)