

ÆTHELRED THE UNREADY

words and music by

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Opera Scenario

Scene One—Upping the Epithet

The periodic Tribunal of Historical Revision is soon to take place. Prodded by his nagging wife Emma, Æthelred the Unready agrees to approach Clio, the powerful Muse of History, in hopes of improving his reputation upon the 1,000th anniversary of his death. Although Emma has still grander aspirations (“Æthelred the Ardent” or “Æthelred the Urgent”), he would be content merely to have his epithet changed to “Æthelred the Adequate.”

Worrying that her husband will make a mess of his appeal, Emma resolves to consult The Publicist for advice. After she leaves, Æthelred is haunted by his childhood disgrace, his “baptismal embarrassment” which prompted him to be cursed by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Scene Two—The Forgetful Muse

Clio is reminded of the upcoming Tribunal by The Assistant, who draws her attention to a request by an obscure Saxon king. Clio has not heard of Æthelred the Unready and plans to ask her friend, the chronicler William of Malmesbury, about him. William appears and, to Clio’s delight, launches into a recital of the exploits of his favorite Saxons. When he is finished, Clio has forgotten the name she wished to ask him about.

Scene Three—Publicist to the Rescue

Emma explains her problems to The Publicist, who advises her to approach William of Malmesbury--whose influence on Clio is known to all. He also recommends obtaining the aid of The Hypnotist, who can embolden Æthelred and make him a more effective advocate for his cause.

Scenes Four and Five—Emma & Dithering William vs. Our Hero at the Hypnotist [take place simultaneously]

Emma attempts to ingratiate herself with William of Malmesbury, who again gets carried away on the subject of Saxon kings. She can scarcely get his attention. Meanwhile, The Hypnotist is putting Æthelred into a trance. He provides him with three mystic words which, when used together in a sentence, make him bold and decisive. But this effect will be thwarted should he speak the forbidden word. Emma gives up on William, departs, and Clio appears. She has remembered Æthelred’s name. It prompts only the dimmest of William’s recollections.

Scene Six—The Great Encounter

Æthelred begins his interview with Clio in a bold and convincing manner; the trance is working. Clio seems impressed. The Assistant interrupts and causes Æthelred to mention--by accident--the forbidden word. Æthelred goes to pieces. His speech comes out wrong, full of spoonerisms and incoherent slips. Clio is bewildered. She dismisses him as a fraud.

Scene Seven--Aftermath

Æthelred encounters Emma, who scorns him; William, who mistakes him for some other English king and drifts off telling of obscure battles; and The Publicist, who proposes a new and more outlandish strategy. Æthelred goes off alone to ponder his fate. To console himself, he sings an ancient love song. The Hypnotist appears and, finding him depressed, puts Æthelred to sleep. While he sleeps, Emma, Clio, William, and The Publicist, as a chorus, sing fatuous warnings against sloth and indolence while advocating bold and bloody actions. Æthelred, assertive at last, sends each of them packing. Finally at peace, in a dream state, he picks up a trumpet and plays a wistful solo.

ÆTHELRED THE UNREADY

SCENE 1—*A motel room at Mt. Olympus, which resembles a spa in upstate New York.*

Emma Æthelred! You must get up. Think how it looks. So many hours lying slugabed. Æthelred! Do wake up.

Æthelred Yes, my love.

Emma So many days and years. You have slept the greater part of a millennium. Such sloth! Such inactivity! Such abject passivity!

Æthelred Yes, my dear.

Emma A dearth of drive, a lack of thrust! No drive, no thrust! Whatever led me to wed one so lacking in motivation? I gave you my youth, my beauty, my social prestige!

Æthelred No doubt, my dear.

Emma Why can't you have been Æthelred the Bold...Æthelred the Resourceful...Æthelred the Stalwart?

Æthelred Alas, my love. You demand too much. My nature falls short.

Emma No kingly nature has ever fallen so short. Think what they have said about you. "A ruler of singular incompetence, who did nothing but postpone and hesitate."
"Wretched and disgraceful."

Æthelred Yes, my dear.

Emma We must redo your image. A fantastic transformation is what we need.

Æthelred Yes, my dear, my faithful Emma.

Emma We shall apply to Clio, the all-powerful Muse of History. There's the Tribunal, the upcoming Tribunal. With Clio's intervention at the upcoming Tribunal, the record can be rewritten. History can be revised. What we need is initiative, imagination and ambition. For once, Æthelred, be up to the challenge!

Æthelred What a thought, my dear, such a thought my dear Emma.

Emma No more, "Æthelred the Unready, with knees unsteady". Rather, "Æthelred the Aggressive, with posture impressive. "

Æthelred Dear me, my love. I fear I fall short, dismally short.

Emma Or Æthelred the Ardent! Æthelred the Urgent! Æthelred the Inexhaustible!

Æthelred My dear...my love...my wife. Let's scale down our aspirations. Let's confront reality. The Muse of History--this formidable figure--she has much on her mind. If I gain her attention, I shall plead for reputational revision. A change in epithet. An improved odor. But let due modesty prevail. I'll seek to replace "Æthelred the Unready" with something more agreeable, more mellifluous, more affirmative. Let me be known in future as "Æthelred the Adequate."

Emma "The Adequate, Æthelred the Adequate"? To tell the truth I had hoped for something a little catchier, a tag with a bit more pizzazz--a name I could bask in a bit--I mean I know this is an improvement...at the same time it seems a trifle timid...

Æthelred It will take some getting used to. I do believe this is not asking too much, not asking much at all--really quite a modest request, a simple rectification, a putting right of an injustice, a longstanding injustice.

Emma I am off to arrange the appointment with Clio. Æthelred, you must prepare to state your case.

[To herself] He will fail in this as in everything else. We truly need help. The Publicist! I wonder, would The Publicist have an idea? He's the master of maneuver and strategy. Would he welcome a challenge? The challenge of his career! The challenge of his life! [She exits.]

Æthelred It won't be easy to argue my case. My record falls short of distinction; and I get scant support from my wife. Ridicule, scorn, disdain and contempt--these are what constitute Emma's assistance. And what will the fearsome Clio perceive? This potent muse prefers battles and blood. She dispenses her favors toward proud achievement. And what have I to offer?

I got off to so terrible a start. A baptismal embarrassment too dreadful to tell. With the bishops assembled, I suffered a lapse, a quite natural occurrence, a moment of infant confusion. Without intending sacrilege, I defiled the font in a shocking way. I was only a babe, a tiny child--but my name was ruined with this single deed.

The upheaval was instant and brought on a curse. The Archbishop of Canterbury- I can hear him now--Dunstan, by name--to the world and posterity he shouted, "By God and his mother, this will be a sorry fellow."

What could I do? I was only a babe. I was doomed though only a babe.

SCENE 2—*Clio's lavish mountaintop, ranch-style house.*

- Clio** As the Muse of History, I savor my many perquisites.
But the pleasure of my power is increasingly qualified by a slippage of mind. Mental failure...a constant muddle. I cannot remember the simplest things. My grasp of daily events, my recollection of favorite battles, of cherished massacres, of horrendous villains...
- Assistant** Muse Clio, I hesitate to interrupt your reverie...
- Clio** Ah, my reliable helper, speak up...
- Assistant** Have you possibly forgotten the impending Tribunal?
- Clio** Oh my gracious. Is it time for that again?
- Assistant** I fear it is once more upon us. Requests and petitions flow in like the tides. Grievances abound.
- Clio** Few are content with posterity's verdict. The power of revision...
- Assistant** Few are content with posterity's verdict. Clio's power of revision is sought all around.
- Clio** What a bother, these interviews. So difficult to follow.
- Assistant** One petition stands out from the rest...most peculiar. From a certain Saxon king.
- Clio** Ah the Saxons! William of Malmesbury, my friend the famous chronicler, has told me so much of these Saxons.
- Assistant** The name is unusual. Æthelred. Spoken of as "Æthelred the Unready."
- Clio** Æthelred the Unready? I've not heard him spoken of.
- Assistant** Little is known of his accomplishments. Evidently not many accomplishments. A dim figure I guess. A poem was written.... not flattering. "With knees unsteady, his brain deady." Something like that.
- Clio** As the Muse of History, I must remember to ask William when next I see him. Which will be next week...
- William** [enters] Ah, Dear Lady,
- Clio** Oh, good heavens...I've forgotten...

William You haven't by chance forgotten our appointment?

Clio Dear William, of course not. Not forgotten... I've awaited your arrival.

William You seem a bit preoccupied...distracted....

Clio I'm amidst preparations for the infernal Tribunal...my periodic duty...

William The emblem of your eminence...of your vast power.

Clio The chance to adjust reputations. To redefine outcomes; to reload the dice. A moment to savor my muse-ish authority. So exhausting this muse-ish authority!

William My lady, your eminence abounds and resounds. Your power defies all comprehension.

Clio I must bear in mind so many details.

William The characters in history fall within your jurisdiction.

Clio But can you help me in one matter? Recall to my ken those many Saxon dignitaries. You know them so well, and I thrill to the telling.

William With pleasure dear lady. First there was Egbert, then Æthelwulf, Æthelbald, Æthelbert...but the slyest of these was Alfred the Great.

Clio Dearest Alfred the Great, a rascally fellow.

William Disguised as a minstrel, he spied on the Danes and...

Both He routed them firmly from England. A thunderous and bloody rout it was.

Clio My pulse quickens at the thought.

William A pulse-quickenning rout it surely was.

Clio Ignominious defeat!

William But let's not neglect Edmund and Edred, Edwig and Edgar, Edward the Martyr and Edmund the Second....

Both But the most pious of these was Edward the Confessor.

Clio Poor childless Edward. He loved to hunt. And those miracles....

William He cured blindness and ulcers and swollen glands.

Clio But his confessions were always a puzzle to me. He was forever at it--awash in guilt.

William Edward ate and drank sparingly. He fought no wars, lowered taxes....

Clio No basis for guilt

William No sins to repent.

Both An idle confessor, he seemed a blameless king.

William Not like my namesake

Clio William the Conqueror.

Both Now he was more like it. A regular stallion.

William He overtook Exeter

Clio and ruined York;

William He burnt

Clio and plundered,

Both spilling blood all around

Clio You capture my heart with these luscious tales.

William Pulse-quickenning tales to win your affection.

Both Blissful stories of blood and war.

William Blissful acts of destruction.

Both Just what the Muse of History savors! The source of boundless prurient delight!

Clio But there is one Saxon about whom I wish to know more.

William Who is it dear Muse?

Clio Oh dear, I have forgotten his name. It's on the tip of my tongue. My assistant will know... [looks about] Drat! She's on her break.

SCENE 3—*The Publicist's office; chrome, glass, and potted palms.*

Publicist Your husband needs to redefine himself.

Emma But we cannot leave it up to him.

Publicist I meant that we—that is, I-- need to redefine him. I never give the client much say.

Emma My husband can hardly say his name. He is timid to a pathological degree. He opens his mouth only to yawn.

Both And as to his other deficiencies

Clio Incompetence, incontinence, inconsequentiality...

Publicist That is sad, but I'd like to assure you...

Emma Fecklessness, mindlessness, non-conviviality...

Publicist Madame, I want you to know. In the sphere of public relations, I have yet to suffer defeat. No matter what diffidence or weakness, no matter what disarray, my professional prowess, my cunning resolve, my crafty...

Emma What we need is a plan of action.

Publicist My thoughts exactly. But may I confide in you? The Muse Clio is much affected, or should I say touched, by the attentions of a certain chronicler, William of Malmesbury. He's a famous authority; and a tiresome bore. Still, were we to gain the favor of this man, were we to somehow catch his eye.

Emma To somehow catch his eye?

Publicist To focus his gaze.

Emma To create an allure?

Publicist To capture his fancy.

Emma To elicit his sympathy?

Publicist To gain his support.

Emma I must think on the implications...

Publicist You must summon the resources...

Emma I must ponder the approach...

Publicist May I mention one thing more?

Emma Please speak.

Publicist Your husband must participate.

Emma My husband participate? Perhaps I have been lacking in clarity. My husband's a veritable mouse.

Publicist Even for that I have the solution. I recommend a science most helpful. You see, hypnosis can embolden a mouse.

Emma The mousiest mouse?

Publicist Hypnosis can embolden the mousiest mouse.

SCENE 4—*Emma and William in the book-lined study within William of Malmesbury's apartment.*

SCENE 5—*Æthelred and The Hypnotist in The Hypnotist's examining room; clinical furnishings.*

[The two scenes take place simultaneously]

Emma It's so rare one meets a great historian.

William Oh, well, I really don't know...I'm delighted...that is I...

Emma A famous, distinguished chronicler who is also so charming...

William Your keen perceptions leave me unable to speak...coherently.

Emma You are clearly generous, sympathetic, and influential.

Æthelred You will find me beyond reach of your skill.

Hypnotist Just focus your gaze on this pendant.

William Ah, dear lady, you are most comely and fetching.

Emma Now there is a matter...something that rates your distinguished attention. A matter of unjust reputation...

William Surely not your precious reputation....

Emma No, not mine, but rather one of a noble Saxon king.

William Ah, a Saxon king! Just my specialty! My particular fondness. Is it perchance Egbert or Æthelwulf?

Emma No, the name is Æthel...

William Æthelbald or Æthelbert?

Emma No, you see, it's my hus....

William You see, Æthelbald and Æthelbert were sons of Æthelwulf. Now there was a daughter--what was her name?

Æthelred My plight is hopeless at best.

Hypnotist Cast your eyes over here if you please.

William The daughter..her dowry was set in Æthelwulf's will. Such a fine will. Something for St. Peter, a bit for St. Paul, a bit for the poor...

Emma Oh dear, what can I do? 'This is hopeless...dear me...his name is Æthelred....

William And then there were the ecclesiastical immunities...

Emma This is getting me nowhere.

William Indeed, yes, they stem from the reign of Charles. Not Charles the Great, of course, but his grandson. Have I spoken of the Vision of Charles?

Emma His...name...is...Æthelred the Unready, with knees unsteady....

William [off in his own world] Such a fright! Those fearsome pits boiling with pitch and brimstone and lead and wax and grease. The blackest demons flying about, with fiery claws. Dragons and scorpions. Evil serpents. Poor Charles...

Emma Oh dear, this is unpleasant. How very disagreeable.

Æthelred "A king of singular incompetence."

Hypnotist Just focus your gaze on this object.

Æthelred "Who did nothing but postpone and hesitate."

Hypnotist You will feel a deep sense of repose.

William Which reminds me of the death of King Alfred. So sad about his disembowelment. Putrefaction was a concern at the time.

Emma I give up the effort; I get nowhere; we must try something else. [she exits]

William What was that daughter's name?

Clio [arriving] Ah William, so refreshing to see you.

William Dear lady, dear Muse. But was there not someone else here? A most agreeable image.... I could have sworn...

Clio Your erudition is sought at this critical moment.

William I am unaccustomed to being in such demand.

Clio A name that had slipped my mind...I now recall. Could you peruse your voluminous memory and relate the accomplishments of a certain Æthelred... called "The Unready."

William Æthelred the Unready? Um. It's a name I've heard recently. But I must tell you it prompts the very dimmest of recollections.

Æthelred "Wretched... and... dis...grace...ful..."

Hypnotist Give yourself up to its power.

Æthelred A ...blissful ...sense....of...es...cape.....

Hypnotist Attention now: You must learn the three mystical words.

Æthelred Oh...blessed...sleep.

Hypnotist Oh no! Not those words. Rather the ones I tell you. Fit them into one sentence--all three of them into one sentence—and all of your difficulties will simply evaporate.

Æthelred Well I am frankly dubious...

William I'm frankly dubious...not much to recall...

Clio However dubious, please tax your memory

Hypnotist The first mystic word is artichoke.

Æthelred I do not know it.

Hypnotist Artichoke. A complex vegetable.

Æthelred Artichoke. Did I not once gag on one?

Hypnotist Many tiny spines...

Æthelred I remember...bloody artichoke!

Hypnotist And the second mystic word is Synecdoche.

Æthelred What? Another mouthful!

Hypnotist Syn-ec-do-che. A figure of speech.

Æthelred What meaning?

Hypnotist The part is taken for the whole. As in, "All hands on deck."

Æthelred Syn-ec-do-che.

Hypnotist And finally, you must learn Tabernacle.

Æthelred Tabernacle

Hypnotist These three words must be placed in one sentence....

Æthelred One telling sentence...

Hypnotist which will cause an emboldening trance, an invigorating spell, an illusion of courage and assertiveness to envelop your being

Æthelred My being enveloped in strength, my nature transformed!

Hypnotist But you must pay close attention to this: Avoid one word...the forbidden word.

Æthelred What is it?

Clio Do tax your distinguished brain. I need some reference...

William
appalled An unfortunate incident at the baptism. The Archbishop of Canterbury was at so public an indiscretion.

All They were cleansing the font for ages...

Clio But his exploits...his kingly accomplishments....

William Alas, they were few in number. Ineffectual bribes to the Vikings. Tardy responses to invasion.

Clio One backfiring policy after another.

William Confusion, mishandling, and sloth.

Clio Indeed, how long did he remain?

William Thirty-eight years of desultory reign.

Clio So long in power for such an incompetent!

William 'Twas a time not given to high expectation. But it must be said that, near the end, he confessed the errors of his youth.

Clio What, another confessor? What prompts these unctuous outpourings?

William You must find out for yourself. I really can't explain it.

Clio Perhaps I should see this sorry figure.

William As you wish, dear Muse; but little will come of it, I'll venture.

Hypnotist The forbidden word is....

Æthelred Yes, I'm listening.

Hypnotist Do not mention the word "Chickenfeed." All will be lost. The trance will vanish in an instant. No "Chickenfeed."

Æthelred It need never cross my lips.

Hypnotist You are now ready for any imaginable challenge.

Both For any imaginable challenge.

SCENE 6—*Clio's dwelling place.*

Assistant Your exalted personage, Muse Clio, I present a Saxon visitor, Æthelred the Second, known through history as "Æthelred the Unready."

Clio Advance into my presence, your royal unreadiness.

Æthelred Uh...uh...a-hem. [to himself] I must conquer my nervousness. [to Clio] Let no artichoke invite..[to himself] Did I say 'invite?' I meant 'invade'[to Clio] Let no artichoke invade the tabernacle of your brow--brow being an example of synecdoche...I believe.

Clio What greeting is this? Some cabalistic mantra? Some mystic rot?

Æthelred [to himself] I am gaining in strength! [to Clio] Your beatitude, Muse Clio, I stand boldly before you, a victim of historical injustice.

Clio Wherein lies your grievance?

Æthelred This preposterous epithet, "The Unready". It has dogged me for a millennium. An open embarrassment. An outrage, a stigmatization.

Clio But your actual accomplishments...

Æthelred Does no one see virtue in kingly restraint? It's true I was phlegmatic and tentative. I dallied and tarried, delayed and evaded. Oh yes, all this is true. And yet, let no one be deceived. My dilatory method concealed a scheme most ingenious. I sought to avoid violence and bloodshed. To prevent misery and despair. It was, if I may say so, a master plan of the subtlest complexion. A service to humanity.

Assistant [interrupting] Muse Clio--an unexpected delivery. A large truck backing up to the door. Saint Dunstan Suppliers...

Clio I recall nothing about a delivery...I know nothing about it.

Assistant An unfamiliar substance is being unloaded.

All An unfamiliar substance, being delivered, unexpectedly, by truck!

Clio Perhaps Your Grace can identify....

Æthelred A recognizable odor.... I do believe it is....chickenfeed! Curses! What have I said?

Clio and Assistant A mistake! Be off! Saint Dunstan Delivery, be off!

Æthelred A mistake, indeed. What was it I was saying?

Clio What was it you were averring just now?

Æthelred I evaded the artichoke by dilly-dallying! [to himself] What words are these? What am I saying? I'll try again. [to Clio] Who but I was phlegmatic in Schenectady! That was the place I defiled the Tabernacle! Alas, my complexion suffered dreadfully.

Clio What is this man talking about? I fear he is beyond my assistance.

Æthelred [to himself] My words come out all wrong. I am tongue-tied and confused Is it Dunstan? The curse of Dunstan? Once again tormenting me!

Assistant Let me help you to the door, your Royal Presence.

Æthelred [to them] I am sullied with royal artichokes! Lead me to the Archbishop of Canterbury! [exits]

Clio Another fraud...a case of fakery. William was right after all.

SCENE 7—*On a footbridge over the river, nearby Clio's home.*

Æthelred For a moment I thought I was winning. I had made such a strong beginning. The spell was working and, for an instant, I was almost changed. Her attention was riveted. I was talking sense. Then all of a sudden...

Emma [enters] Husband, how did you fare?

Æthelred I was inadequate.

Emma Don't tell me.

Æthelred I fell short...dismally short.

Emma Another fiasco. Why must it be this way? You lack all fortitude.

Æthelred For an instant, I had Clio's attention.

Emma Insufficient to the core.

Æthelred Confident, assertive....

Emma Blundering, fumbling...

Æthelred Clear and effective...

Emma Stumbling and defective...

Æthelred I was almost winning.

Emma Yet another defeat for us both.

Both It's more than I can bear.....this benighted failure

Æthelred No hope for improvement

Emma No hope for change.... [exits]

William [enters] Here's a figure I almost recognize.

Æthelred I am one of your Saxon monarchy.

William A king? A Saxon king? Some Saxon hero? Don't tell me your name--I can say it. You are Edmund. or Edwig or Edred. Yes Edred, that's it, I am sure. You beat back the Northumbrian wretches. But you suffered, if I remember correctly, digestive distress. Unable to swallow—such an unfortunate problem. A regrettable defect.
[exits]

Æthelred He has never acknowledged my being. He has never kept me straight. I am not on his list of favorites. This blithering fool! It's by such dithering hands that reputations are shaped—or mis-shaped.

Publicist [enters] Ah, so, my client! Is my client triumphant?

Æthelred Take a closer look, sir. I am virtually supine.

Publicist Did the strategy fail us?

Æthelred Most decisively it failed us.

Publicist I never give up. Another chance. I need another chance. A stunning new plan. Something guaranteed to hit home. Influence applied at the vital spot.

Æthelred I am exceedingly doubtful.

Publicist We must play to their vulnerabilities.

Æthelred My reservations...

Publicist Exploit weakness...

Æthelred grow by the minute.

Publicist threaten exposure....

Æthelred With respect, sir, I'll postpone further action. I need to ponder and deliberate; to ruminate alone.

Publicist You will find me at my office

Æthelred To ruminate alone.

Publicist When you need my special services.... [exits]

Æthelred I'll ponder and deliberate.

[Æthelred, alone, walks off the bridge to a bench by the river. He sings an ancient air.]

“One morning in the sweet month of May

as the sun was rising an orchard did I enter.
Beneath the pine a maid picked roses.
I drew near and offered true love.
She replied to me: Oh never shall you touch me,
for I already have a sweet friend.
One morning in the sweet month of May.”

Hypnotist [enters] You seem weary...in need of a tonic.

Æthelred My spirits are flagging. [He settles on the bench.]

Hypnotist Just focus once again on this pendant.

Æthelred Spare me anguish, pain, confusion.

Hypnotist Just focus your gaze...

Æthelred Oh blessed sleep [he sleeps]

Hypnotist Embrace deep slumber. [exits]

Emma

Clio

William

Publicist We must not sleep our lives away
Let's banish sloth and inaction
Deeds of glory, acts of courage
Only these give satisfaction.

Æthelred What rubbish is this? What propaganda?

Emma

Clio

William

Publicist Nothing counts like fervent self-regard.
Advancement, status and clout.
Let's banish ineffectuality
With this seemingly incantation.

Æthelred Drivel! Detritus! Stuff and nonsense!
Propaganda! Parasitic blather! Empty rhetoric!
Piffle! Cant! Sheer eyewash!

Emma

Clio

William

Publicist The image is all powerful
Self-promotion is the highest goal.

Æthelred Begone you scurrilous porcupine!
Promotion bah! Demotion, yes!
You merit rank demotion.
Begone! Depart in disgrace! [Publicist exits]

Emma
Clio
William Deeds of glory, acts of courage
These constitute our satisfaction

Æthelred Poppycock! Twaddle!
Banish forever this rot
It breeds extreme stupefaction.

Clio
William I cherish deeds and acts of war!

Æthelred Bugger off, you bloody bore! [Clio exits]

William I cherish...

Æthelred You'll perish! You oafish dervish [William exits]

Æthelred [to himself]

I've spared the world travail.
Shunning every brute aggression
Inclining toward more lyric expression
Through gentle ornament and apt detail.

What strength I have
Though faint and fleeting
Leaves me your good sympathy entreating

And with this timid verse,
I'll thwart foul Dunstan's ancient curse
And let meek sentiments prevail

And now dear people
The time has come
Find amusement elsewhere--some mute caprice
I've taken all I intend to take
And will now be left in peace.

[Æthelred, in a dream state, finally at peace, picks up a trumpet and plays a wistful solo.] END OF OPERA

