

ĐR WL CM SOFT RENZ

Re Bradbri

In đ livñrūm đ vōscloc sañ, Tíc-toc, sevn o'cloc, tîm t gt p, tîm t gt p, sevn o'cloc! az f it wr afreid nbdi wd. Đ mornñhās le emti. Đ cloc tict on, rpitñ n rpitñ its sãdz intu đ emtinis. Sevn-nîn, brečfsťîm, sevn-nîn!

In đ cién đ brečfststov gev a hisñ sai n ijctd fřm its worm intirir et pìsz v prfeli brãnd tost, et egz súnisîd-up, sixtîn slîsz v bêcn, tū cofiz, n tū cūl glasz v milc.

“Tde z Ōğst 4, 2026,” sd a secnd vōs fřm đ ciénsîlñ, “in đ siti v Ałndel, Calforña.” It rpitd đ det řri tîmz fr memři'z sec. “Tde z Mr. Fedřston'z brřde. Tde z đ aņvrři v Tilita'z marij. Inśurņs z peybl, az r đ wōtr, gas, n lît bîlz.”

Smwr in đ wōlz, řilez clict, memřiteps glîdd undr ilectric îz.

Et-wn, tíc-toc, et-wn o'cloc, of t scūl, of t wrc, run, run, et-wn! Bt no dorz slamd, no carpits tc đ soft tréd v rubr hîlz. It wz renñ ätsd. Đ wedřbox on đ fruntdor sañ qaytli: “Ren, ren, g awe; rubrz, rencots fr tde...” N đ ren tapt on đ emti hās, ecowñ.

Ätsd, đ garij cîmd n liftd its dor t rvil đ wêtn car. Aftr a loñ wêt đ dor swuñ đãn agn.

At et-řrti đ egz wr śrivld n đ tost wz lîc ston. An ałmiñm wěj scrept đm đãn a metl řrot wć djstd n flušť đm awe t đ distnt sî. Đ drti diśz wr dropt intu a hot wośr n imrjd twncłñ drî.

Nîn-fiftîn, sañ đ cloc, tîm t clîn. Ät v worņz in đ wōl, tîni robótmîs dardd. Đ rūmz wr acrōl wđ đ smōl clîññ animlz, ol rubr n metl. Đe řudd agnst écz, wrlñ đer mstašť runrz, nîdñ đ rugnap, sucñ jntli at hidn dust. Đen, lîc mstirîs invedr, đe popt intu đer buroz. Đer pnc ilectric îz fedd. Đ hās wz clîn.

Ten o'cloc. Đ sún cem ät fřm bhnd đ ren. Đ hās std alon in a siti v rubl n aśz. Đs wz đ wn hās left standñ. At nît đ ruind siti gev of a redioactiv glo wć cd b sìn fr mîlz.

Ten-fiftîn. Đ gardnsprinclrz wřld p in goldn fãnts, filñ đ soft mornñ er wđ scařřñz v brîtnis. Đ wōtr pltd windopeinz, runñ đãn đ éard wst sîd wř đ hās hd bn brnd řvnli fri v its wît pent. Đ intîr wst fes v đ hās wz blac, sev fr řiv plesz. Hir đ siluét in pent v a man mowñ a lōn. Hir, az in a fotřgraf, a wmn bnt t pic flărz. Stl farđr ovr, đer imřz brnd on wűd in wn tîtanic instnt, a smōl bō, handz fluñ intu đ er; hayr p, đ imij v a řroun bōl, n opřit him a grl, hand rezd t cac a bōl wć nvr cem đãn. Đ řiv spots v pent – đ man, đ wmn, đ cîldřn, đ bōl – rmend. Đ rest wz a řin čarcold leyr. Đ jntl sprinclřen fild đ gardn wđ fōlñ lît.

Untl đs de, hă wel đ hās hd cept its pîs. Hă cerfli it hd inqîrd, ‘Hu gz đř? Wt's đ paswrđ?’ n, gřñ no ansr fřm lonli fořz n wîññ cats, it hd śut p its windoz n drwn śêdz in an old-meidnli priokpeśn wđ slf-přřxn wć bordrd on a mcaničl parņoia.

It qivrd at é sãnd, d hãs dd. F a sparo brušt a windo, d šêd snapt p. Ð brd, startld, flù of! No, nt ïvn a brd mst tuć d hãs!

Ð hãs wz an òltr wđ ten řãznd atndnts, big, smòl, srvisñ, atndñ, in qîrz. Bt d godz hd gn awe, n d rićl v d rlijn cntinyd snslisli, yslisli.

Twelv nūn.

A dog wînd, šivřñ, on d fruntporć.

Ð fruntdor rećgnîzd d dog'z vòs n opnd. Ð dog, wns larj n fleši, bt nã gn t bon n cuvrd wđ sorz, muvd in n řru d hãs, tracñ mud. Bhnd it wřd angri mîs, angri at hvñ t pic p mud, angri at incnviñns.

Fr nt a lîf fragmnt blù undr d dor bt wřt d wòlpanlz flipt opn n d copr-scrap rats flašt swiftli àt. Ð ofndñ dust, her, or pepr, sizd in minićr stîl jwz, wz rêst bac t d buroz. Ðr, dãn tybz wć féd intu d sélr, it wz dropt lîc ïvl Bãl in a darc cornr.

Ð dog ran upsterz, histericli yelpñ t é dor, at last riylîzñ, az d hãs riylîzd, dť onli sîlñs wz hir. It snift d er n sraćt d cićndor. Bhnd d dor, d stov wz mcñ pancecs wć fild d hãs wđ a rić òdr n d sént v mepl sirp. Ð dog froťt at d măt, layñ at d dor, snifñ, its îz trnd t fîr. It ran wîldli in srclz, bîťñ at its teil, spun in a frenzi, n daid. It le in d parlr fr an aur.

Tū 'cloc, sañ a vòs.

Delicťli snsñ dce at last, d rejimnts v mîs humd àt az softli az bloun gre lîvz in an ilectricl wind.

Tū-fiftîn.

Ð dog wz gn.

In d sélr, d insiņretr gloud sudnli n a wřl v sparcs lept p d címni.

Tū řrti-fřv.

Brijteblz sprăt fřm patiowòlz. Pleyñcardz flutrd ontu padz in a šãr v pips. Martînz maņfstđ on an ocn bnć wđ eg sałd sanwřz. Mzic pleid.

Bt d teblz wr sîlnt n d cardz untućt.

At for o'cloc d teblz foldd lîc gret buťflîz bac řru d panld wòlz.

For-řrti.

Ð nršriwòlz gloud.

Animlz tc šep: yelo jrafs, blu laynz, pnc antłops, lîlac panřrz cvortñ in cristl substns. Ð wòlz wr glas. Ðe lct àt upn culr n fanřsi. Hidn filmz cloct řru d wel-òld sproćits, n d wòlz livd. Ð nršriflor wz wovn t rzmbł a crisp sírl medo. Ovr dš ran almiím roćz n ayn cricits, n in d hot stil er buťflîz v delicť red tišu wevrd amñ d šarp aroma v animlsporz! Ðr wz d sãnd lîc a gret matd yelo hîv v bîz wđn a darc beloz, d lezi bumbl v a pñ layn. N dř wz d patr v ocãpi fît n d mrmr v a fres junglren, lîc uđř hũfs fòlñ upn d sumr-starćt gras. Nã d wòlz dzolvđ intu distnsz v parćt wîd, mîl on mîl, n worm endlis scî. Ð animlz drù awe intu řorn breics n wòtr houlz. It wz d ćildřn'z aur.

Fřv o'cloc. Ð bať fild wđ clir hot wòtr.

Six, sevn, et o'cloc. Ð dinrdiřz mnipyletđ lîc majic trics, n in d studi a clic. In d metl stand opzít d harť wř a fîr nã blezd p wormli, a sgar popt àt, haf an inc v soft gre aś on it, smocñ, wêtñ.

Nîn o'cloc. Ð bedz wormd dęr hidn srcits, fr nîts wr cūl hir.

Nîn-fîv. A vôs spouc fřm đ studi sîlñ: “Msz. MCleĭn, wć powm wd y líc đs ĭvnñ?”

Đ hās wz sĭnt.

Đ vôs sd at last, “Sins y xpres no prefřns, I śl s’lect a powm at randm.” Qayt mżic rouz t bac đ vôs. “Şera Tĭzdel. Az I rcōl, yr fevrit...

Đr wl cm soft renz n đ smel v đ grănd
N swoloz srçlñ wđ đer śimřñ sănd

N frogz in đ pŭlz sññ at nît
N wĭld plumtrĭz in tremĭs wĭt.

Robinz wl wer đer feđri fĭr,
Wĭşlñ đer wĭmz on a lo fns-wĭr,

N nt wn wl nŏ v đ wor, nt wn
Wl cer at last wñ it z dn.

Nt wn wd mĭnd, nđr brd nr tri,
F mancĭnd perişt utrli

N Sprñ hrslf, wñ ś wouc at dŏn,
Wd scersli nŏ đt w wr gn.”

Đ fĭr brnd on đ ston harĭ n đ sgar fĕl awe intu a mănd v qayt aś on its tre. Đ emti ćerz fest ć uđř btwn đ sĭnt wŏlz, n đ mżic pleid.

At ten o’cloc đ hās bgan t đĭ.

Đ wind blŭ. A fŏlñ trĭbau craşt řru đ cićnwindo. Clĭnñsolvnt, botld, śatrd ovr đ stov. Đ rŭm wz ablez in an instnt! “Fĭr!” scřĭmd a vôs. Đ hās lĭts flaşt, wŏtrpumps śot wŏtr fřm đ sĭlñz. Bt đ solvnt spred on đ l’nołm, licñ, ĭtñ, undr đ cićndor, wĭ đ vŏsz tc it p in cŏřs: “Fĭr, fĭr, fĭr!”

Đ hās traid t sev itslf. Dorz sprañ tĭtli śut, bt đ windoz wr brocn bĭ đ hĭt, n đ wind blŭ n suct upn đ fĭr.

Đ hās gev grănd az đ fĭr in ten biłn angrĭ spares muvd wđ flemñ ĭz fřm rŭm t rŭm n đen p đ sterz. Wĭ scuriyñ wŏtrats sqĭct fřm đ wŏlz, pistld đer wŏtr, n ran fr mor. N đ wŏlsprez let đăn śărz v mcanicl ren.

Bt tŭ lĕt. Smŭr, sayñ, a pump śrugd t a stop. Đ qncñ ren sĭst. Đ rzrv wŏtrs’plĭ wć fild đ badz n woşt đ diśz fr mni qayt dez wz gn.

Đ fĭr craclđ p đ sterz. It fĕd upn Pcasoz n Matĭsz in đ upr hŏlz, lĭc deliçsiz, becñ of đ ôli fleś, tndrli crispñ đ canvsz intu blac śevñz.

Nă đ fĭr le in bedz, std in windoz, ćenjđ đ culrz v dreprs!

N đen, riinformsnts.

Fřm atic trapdorz, blĭnd robŏtfesz pĭrd đăn wđ fŏsit măđz guśñ grĭn cemicl.

Ð fîr bact of, az ĩvn an elifnt mst at d sît v a ded snec. Nă đr wr twenti snecs wipñ ovr d flor, cilñ d fîr wđ a clir cold venm v grĭn frođ.

Bt d fîr wz clevr. It hd snt flemz ätsd d hăs, p ڑru d atic t d pumps đr. An xploźn! Ð aticbren wć d'rectd d pumps wz šatrd intu bronzšrapnl on d bĭmz.

Ð fîr rušt bac intu evri clozit n flt v d clodž đt huñ đr.

Ð hăs šudrd, oc bon on bon, its bėrd scelitn crinjñ frĭm d hĭt, its wĭr, its nrvz rvild az f a srjn hd torn d scin of t let d red veinz n cpiłriz qivr in d scōldd er. Hlp, hlp! Fĭr! Run, run! Hĭt snapt mirrz lĭc d frst britl wintr ĩs. N d vōsz weild Fĭr, fĭr, run, run, lĭc a trajic nršrirĭm, a duzn vōsz, hĭ, lo, lĭc čildrĭn dayñ in a forist, alon, alon. N d vōsz fedñ az d wĭrz popt đer šĭđñž lĭc hot česnuts. Wn, tũ, ڑri, for, fĭv vōsz daid.

In d nršri d jungl brnd. Blu laynz rord, prpl jrafs bändd of. Ð panڑrz ran in srlcz, čenjñ culr, n ten miłn animlz, runñ bfr d fĭr, vaništ of twd a distnt stĭmñ rivr...

Ten mor vōsz daid. In d last instnt undr d fĭr aylanć, uđr corșz, oblivĭs, cd b hrd anănsñ d tĭm, pleyñ mźic, cutñ d lōn bĭ rmot-ctrl mowr, or setñ an umbrella franticli ät, n in d slamñ n opanñ fruntdor a ڑăznd ڑñž hapññ, lĭc a clocšop wñ č cloc strĭcs d aur insenli bfr or afrt d uđr, a sĭn v meñac cnfyžn, yt ynti; sññ, scrĭmñ, a fy last clĭññ mĭs dartñ brevli ät t cari d horid ašz awe! N wn vōs, wđ sblĭm disrigard fr d sićuešn, rėd powtri alăd ol in d fĭri studi, untl ol d filmspũlz brnd, untl ol d wĭrz wiđrd n d srcits cract.

Ð fĭr brst d hăs n let it slam flat dăn, puřñ ät scrts v sparc n smoc.

In d cićn, an instnt bfr d ren v fĭr n timbr, d stov cd b sĭn mcñ brečfsts at a sĭcpařic ret, ten duzn egz, six lozv v tost, twenti duzn bėcn strips, wć, ĩtn bĭ fĭr, startd d stov wreñ agn, histericli hisñ!

Ð craš. Ð atic smašñ intu d cićn n parlr. Ð parlr intu sėlr, sėlr intu subsėlr. Dĭp frĭz, armćer, filmteps, srcits, bedz, n ol lĭc scelitnz ڑroun in a clutrd mănd đĭp undr.

Smoc n sĭłns. A gret qontti v smoc.

Dōn šoud fentli in d ĩst. Amñ d ruinz, wn wōl std alon. Wđn d wōl, a last vōs sd, ovr n ovr agn n agn, ĩvn az d sún rouz t šĭn upn d hĭp v rubl n stĭm:

“Tde z Őğst 5, 2026, tde z Őğst 5, 2026, tde z...”

