

THE THREE WORDS

NAFIS IMTIAZ ONISH

Three words. Three words, three—that was all that it took to turn Arnob's world upside down.

As the first rays of sunlight seeped through the fine cracks of his bedside window, Arnob quickly shielded his eyes from the penetrating rays. "Which day is it? Is it over yet?" He rubbed his eyes and fumbled for his glasses, almost tipping over the half empty glass on his nightstand. He stumbled onto his feet and headed towards the kitchen.

A new day, a new loop. "How long have I been doing this?", he wondered. As far as he can remember, he has been stuck in this infinite loop, this unending labyrinth he created for himself. "When will it end..." Pensively, he fidgeted through his daily chores.

Three words—funny how all things magical come in threes. Even more so, they delude you with all their beauty till



you actually get inured to them. And then the inevitable happens; before you know it, you discover yourself in the middle of nowhere with no clue about how to escape.

Arnob had gone through the same cycle. He vividly remembered the first

time he read the three powerful words. He was a jubilant young lad. He thought he had seen the most intricately beautiful thing unravel in front of his eyes. He thought he had finally found the purpose of his life, the singular motto—to drive his life forward. And so he did. Everyday

upon waking, he would knit up a new story using the three words.

Everything was going fine and dandy. He would eagerly come back home to see the response he would get from his masterpieces. It was all so exciting. But soon enough, he was engulfed by the burning desire to keep knitting together one masterpiece after the other. It was a disease that kept eating into him. He was unstoppable, unrelenting.

He abided by what the three words told him to do: KEEP IT GOING. He kept it going for as long as he could...a bit too long.

Arnob sat back on his couch. It was time. He picked his phone up and took the screenshots for the day. He slowly typed away: #keepitgoing.

Nafis Imtiaz Onish believes grinning is the answer to everything. He also avidly loves art, astronomy & all things nerdy. Send him Carl Sagan fan art at nafisimtiaz17@gmail.com

LIFE PLANNING CENTER



FARAH MASUD

A tilt to the left,
 A tilt to the right
 That's how your life
 Can be fixed at sight.

A little stitch here,
 A little stitch there
 And that'll make you ready
 All set and clear.

Service completed,
 Your whole life's planned
 Double checked, reviewed
 And measured in advance.

To all the Grays

MAHERA AIMAN NOOR

There are 100 billion stars in our galaxy, each shining a different colour. But Eve was looking at no star in particular as she gazed upon the sky, nor was she aware of El staring at her. She was escaping another one of her reveries when a thought came to her. She finally took in the view which is rarely seen nowadays. The stars filled the sky, illuminating it. It looked beautiful enough that she cracked a smile, until she focused on one star in particular. It wasn't the brightest star nor was it the largest. It was just a star. Her smile faded. That star is like me, a gray, she thought.

"Tell me what that look means." El said, a ghost of a smile playing on his lips. Eve's attention snapped back to El.

"It means daunting realisation of something immensely important." Eve replied, her voice thick with sarcasm. Perhaps that way El wouldn't be able to detect the trickle of truth in her words.

"Was that sarcasm or an exaggerated version of the truth?" El asked that insufferable grin on his face. He knew her long enough to detect the truth, unfortunately.

"Why can't it be both?" Eve replied dreamily. El laughed.

"Why, indeed?" El said. A silence fell between them as they looked at the view.

"A thought for a thought?" Eve asked playfully even though her heart threatened to hammer out of her chest. Perhaps Eve felt reckless or it was simply the heat of the moment that drove her to say it. El's eyebrows rose in surprise. But the grin was soon back.

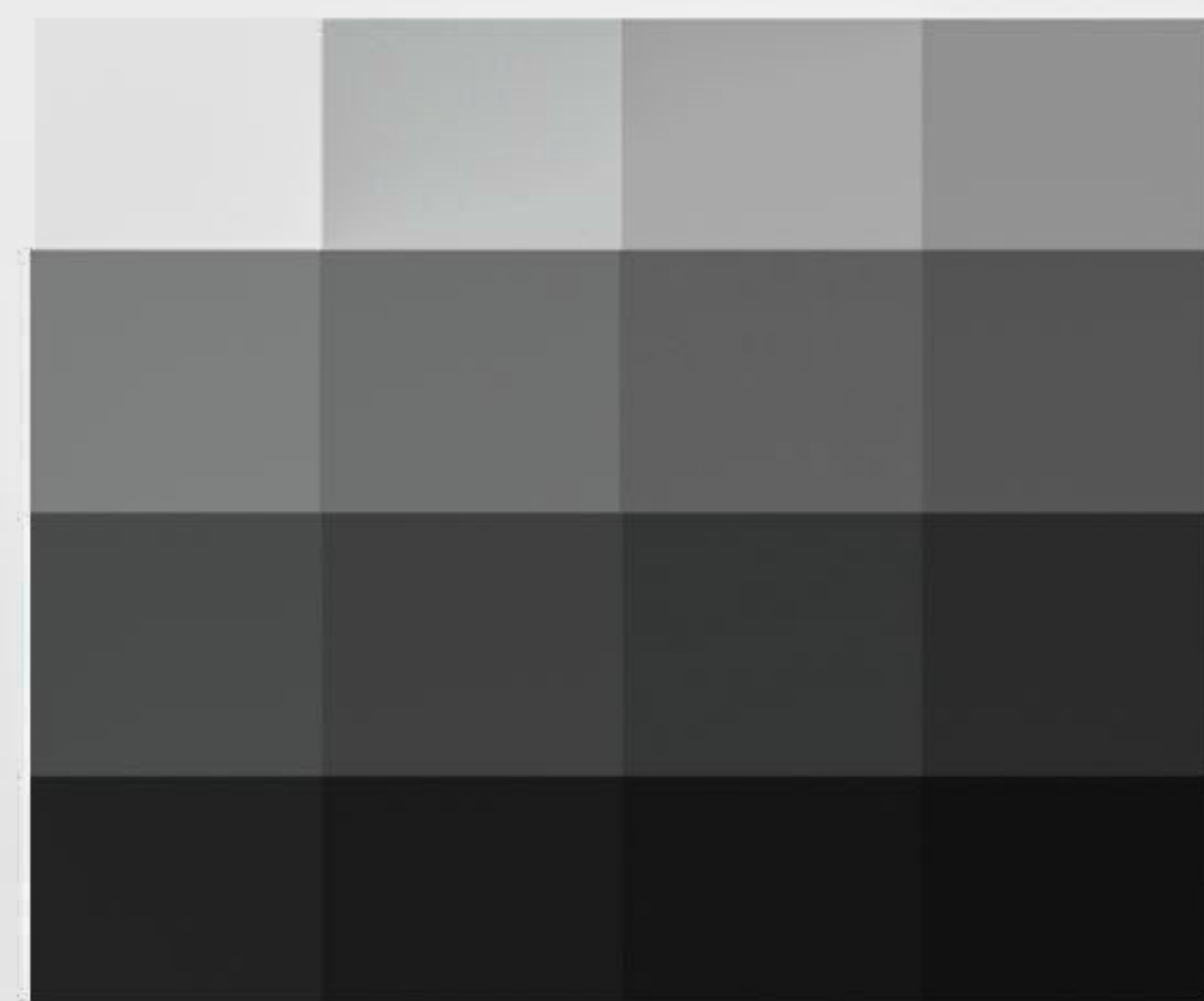
"You first." El said

"I am thinking that there are two kinds of people in this world, the blacks and the whites... Don't you dare crack a racist joke here, El, I am talking about something much deeper than skin tone," Eve said with no amount of anger in her voice. El raised his hand in surrender.

"The whites are basically these people who have everything. They are funny, witty, kind and not to mention awfully smart. They end up doing some-

thing for the world. Inventing or discovering something crazy. They are like all the colors in the rainbow. Then there are the blacks. Mediocre. Average in everything. They are content with a happy simple life with a family. They find their true love and grow old together." Eve paused to take a breath, El didn't say anything. He waited for her to go on.

"And I am thinking that in between them, without a place in this world are the grays. They strive to be the whites, to make a name for themselves or to help the world. But they just... they just can't. And no matter how hard the grays try, they can't be contented with a simple life. They aren't cut out for that kind of happiness. And I am thinking that somewhere between the thousand shades of gray



there is me." Eve said with an air of finality.

"That was... three thoughts. Looks like I owe you two thoughts" El said. And Eve could have kissed him then, for not trying to comfort her. For trying to understand exactly what she had laid bare. They both then looked at the infinite sky, for once being okay with knowing exactly how insignificant they were compared to it.

The writer is a grade 7 student of Sir John Wilson School.