Deception

By: Brittan Collins

When I woke up, I found myself in a completely relaxed state. The sun beams were shining through the old window on my house. After sitting and thinking for a while, I arose from my bed to start the day*. Life has been good lately,* I thought to myself. The well-paying job I had acquired recently, I was hired to photograph some landscape for a high-end catalog. I had also been able to repair a relationship with an old friend that I had got into an argument with so long ago that I didn’t even remember what it was about.

 After having my coffee, I walked out the front door of my house and got into my car. My dark black Jeep was waiting for me by the curb. I headed towards the site where I was going to be shooting. On the way there, I made a mental checklist; to be sure I had all of my things together. As I drove down the black paved road, I made note of the beautiful scenery around me. The tall grey mountains were towering above me and surrounding me as if I were in a large bowl. The green grass moved in the gentle breeze in a way that mimicked pine trees swaying in the wind. *It is beautiful out*; I thought to myself. *The only reason I am a photographer is because I see beauty in the world around me. I go through life “framing-up” countless images in my head, as though I am viewing life through the lens of my camera.* This thought rang in my head like an alarm clock; it almost came as a realization. As I drove, I entered a strange state. I became acutely aware of everything around me. This feeling was very relaxing and gave me a sense that everything in the world was as it should be.

When I arrived at the site where I was going to shoot, I got out all of my photography gear. It was a beautiful mountain scene with flowers blooming around the base of the mountain. One particular flower stood out from the rest. The flower glowed like the sun. Its yellow was just more than the others. I started shooting the mountain. I took one shot after another. I was so engrossed in taking pictures that I never took that much time to really look at the mountain. I walked around to different parts of the mountain, so I could get different angles on the shot. As the sun shifted, it created interesting shadows that created an entirely different feel. Once I was happy with the pictures, I packed up all of my gear and headed home.

 On the way home, I drove in complete silence. You could have heard a pin drop. Not even the stereo was playing. I just drove. The very routine scenery relaxed me. When I got home, I was frantic to see how the pictures came out. I loaded the pictures into my computer. As they imported, I waited anxiously hoping that they came out well. Once they were done, I began to cycle through the many shots I had taken. I was about three quarters of the way through my photos, when I noticed the strangest thing. One particular angle I was shooting from, at the very top of the mountain, was not there. It wasn’t cut off from poor shooting. It just simply wasn’t there. It was like it was invisible or something. I just couldn’t come up with an explanation for the odd photo. I decided that I would go back the next day and check things out.

 The next morning I woke up very early, at about six o’clock. Driven by my confusion about the photo, I drove straight to the site where I had been taking pictures. Once I was there I began searching the mountain looking at it from all angles. I had no success in finding anything out of order. I sat down in frustration and began to think that maybe I was going insane. After sitting for a long while I peered up at the mountain. To my surprise, there it was directly in front of me, the top of the mountain was not visibly there. Now, I was clearly upset, I was simply going crazy I thought. Finally, I decided to hike out into the mountains to see exactly what was happening, and put my mind at ease. There simply had to be a logical explanation!

 I started my hike up into the mountains. As I was walking I was extremely diligent in looking at everything to see if it was in place and normal. I walked onto a trail that headed in the direction of the top of the mountain. The mountain remained askew at the top. It was about nine o’clock and I was nearing the part of the mountain that was missing. When I got there it was strange. I walked onto the top of the mountain which was just flat. There was nothing but a perfectly flat top. What I saw next was beyond my own level of comprehension. I looked tentatively over the side of the mountain. The side that you couldn’t see from where I was taking pictures, and there was nothing, just a void. I could see nothing but white emptiness. In that moment, the things around me slowly started to go white. Everything started to disappear. Even the very ground I stood on was gone. A feeling came over me like I was going to fall into a void or something. It was too much to handle, my heart started to race and then everything went black. I was out cold.

 The next thing I remember is waking up on a cold metal table. I had a whole bunch of tubes going into me. Then a lady with light orange hair came into the room. Without telling me anything, she stuck a needle in my arm and once again, I was out. This went on for what I assumed to be about two or three days. Finally they let me wake up. When I woke up I was surrounded by a bunch of people in white lab coats. I noticed that over each of their hearts they wore a strange pin that said *Deception*. The pin had an arched center with strangely written text. Upon the top of the pin a bird sat majestically. The thought of the pin dissolved from my mind and Then One of the men started to speak to me. He spoke with a very hoarse voice. “How are you feeling,” he asked.

 “I feel ok but I don’t know where I am. I was hiking up a mountain and then, the world went white. Everything around me disappeared and then I blacked out.”

 “What I am about to tell you is very bad news and may upset you,” He said grimly.

 “What,” I questioned.

 “The world you live in is an illusion. When you were born you were chosen to be used as a test subject to be put into a fake world. The purpose of the experiment was to see if a human could live in a synthetic environment.”

“What world do I live in,” I asked.

He said, “You still live on earth but you don’t live in 2012 you live in 3007.”

He told me the story of what he called, “Project Deception.”

He began to speak, “In 2987 the scientific community decided to do an experiment called Project Deception. In this project we had a drawing to pick five new born babies to be put into a computer generated world with computer generated parents to see if a human could live in a synthetic world. You are one of those people. Those people that were chosen along with you were put in relatively close proximity to you in the computer generated world. You have had interactions with some of them but not all of them. Remember your friend that you just recently started speaking to again, he is real. In fact he is in the next room over. Just the other day the computer that has been creating this world crashed, and that is why you are here, that is why they are all here.”

“Why would anybody do such a thing,” I said with a voice being taken over by emotion.

“I can see that you aren’t taking this well,” he said bluntly.

He could see that I was getting upset with all of this. He and the others left the room. As he walked out the door he said, “We’ll give you time to take all of this in.”

My mental state was decreasing by the minute, and I had no idea what to do. I could not believe this. “Everything I know is false,” I said out loud to myself.

My parents are fake. My friends are fake. “My life is fake,” I screamed out loud.

This idea made me so unhappy. I felt like a young one that had just had a toy taken. Instead of a toy my entire life has been taken from me. I ripped all of the tubes and medical equipment off of my body. My conclusion was that this terrible world wasn’t worth living in. I thought to myself, *if they are going to use me as a science experiment they are going to work hard to do it.* An alarm sounded. All of the men in white coats came running to my bed they tried to restrict me from running. All I could think to do was punch my way through them. I bloodied at least five of their noses before one of them blindsided me in the side of the head. Once again I found myself unconscious.

I woke up once more on the cold metal table, only this time I was hand cuffed to it. There was a distinct pain in my head. It hurt right wear I had been punched in the temple. I didn’t see much of any body for a few days. The only people I saw were those that fed me and gave me different assortments of drugs. They never spoke, just quietly did their jobs. Over these few days I thought of what I was going to do. There was no doubt in my mind that I if was forced to live in this world I would go insane. But then again I couldn’t live in the other world without feeling absolutely fake. In the middle of this deep thought the man that had spoken to me earlier walked into the room and began to speak. “So what are your thoughts on this whole ordeal,” he questioned.

“I don’t know,” I said.

Then I exclaimed, “All I have to say is that anybody that has been a part of this so called Deception, is sick.”

“By the way what is your roll in this terrible thing,” I asked.

He spoke with a smirk, “Twenty years ago I was hired as project manager. I am in charge of everything we do in this Project.”

I had nothing to say to that, so I did not speak. He said, “So what are we to do with you?”

I said grimly, “Just kill me or something.”

He said, ‘By law we cannot do that.”

I said, “I realize now why you called this project deception. In my mind the world I’m in now is the fake one and I cannot live in it with peace. The fake world is the one that I know to be real. Well I have been deceived so congratulations.”

He said, “If you wish we can erase your memory and simply put you back into the fake world.”

“You will remember nothing,” He exclaimed.

I agreed to this. I knew inside that I could not live like this.

He said, “Come over here and get into the chamber.”

“The chamber,” I questioned.

“It will insert you into the computer world once more,” He said.

I climbed into the chamber feeling a little scared to continue a life of deception. He put all of this strange electronic gear on me and I stepped into the chamber. He said, “Once you are in the computer world I will speak to you.”

“Ok,” I said questionably.

He flipped a lever and in the blink of an eye I was at home looking through my photos that I had taken. “What now,” I yelled out loud.

“Now I will erase your memory and life will go back to normal.” A voice that came from nowhere said.

“Three, Two, One,” The voice counted down.

“Oh, I exclaimed my photos are done importing. I must have spaced out for a while.” I said to myself.