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**Terminal Moraine** by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | MAY 2017

## **Terminal Moraine**

by Mike Bozart

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Hua is a 24-year-old, single, Chinese female from the village of Jiayuguan, some 2,000 kilometers (1,243 miles) west of Beijing on the edge of the Gobi Desert. This Gansu province town has a tourist draw: a fortified section of The Great Wall from the Han Dynasty period. When Hua was ten years younger, she would often see middle-aged Caucasian foreigners and wonder what their lives were like. She dreamed of visiting America and Western Europe. “Someday” she would murmur to herself.

Being in such a remote area, there was no worthwhile work to be found after high school. So, Hua did what most other non-college-bound young women did: She left for Shanghai to work in a factory; hers made Barbie® dolls.

Hua worked 13 hours a day, six days a week. Sunday was her lone day off, but it was no day for relaxation, as she shared the small dormitory with five other females. Thus, Hua often spent her Sundays walking about the compound, thinking about her family 2,700 kilometers (1,678 miles) away.

The work was repetitive to the point of being mind-numbing. She often wondered if automation would replace her. And, she often wondered if she might ever get a non-assembly job – like one in the nice overhead office suite.

As she stuck the smiling blonde-haired doll heads onto the molded torso’s neck pegs, she thought about Christmas Day (2015) overseas. *Will this one lie under a tree in the United States? Will the lucky girl wonder where the doll came from? I doubt it.*

With in-excess-of, per-piece bonuses, which were actually quite menial, Hua hoped to have her first ¥3,500 (yuan) month (about \$507) after over 330 hours of finger-cramping, wrist-twisting toil.

On the second Sunday in December at 8:38 AM, she got a call from her mom. One of her friends, whose mom was also a friend of her mom, who had been working at the vast Confoxx facility in Shenzhen, had committed suicide by jumping from a fourth-floor window.

Hua, in a stunned state, ended the phone call. *Why did she do it? Ling said that she enjoyed making iPads and iPhones. But, she did say that it could get stressful. Maybe they pushed her too hard. So sad.*

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