

## GUARDIAN

### Chapter: 98

Guo Changcheng's cellphone contained the last text message that Chu Shuzhi had sent to him, telling him not to come to the small resort town no matter what. Even more, he must stop others from going.

By the time Guo Changcheng thought of turning to ask him how to achieve this simply described goal of "stopping others from going", and also to report that Zhu Hong had ran away while he was at it, he found that the other was no longer within service area.

Guo Changcheng suddenly had a feeling that all the people in the world had disappeared, leaving him alone and helpless. He didn't know how long he parked the car on the side of the road for before he summoned up his courage and followed the GPS to the nearby county, heading straight to the local police bureau.

From far away, he could already see a large crowd of people in front of the police station entrance, blocking the road so much so that not even water could pass through. Guo Changcheng honked his horn, but nobody paid any attention to him. Just as he was about to open the car door, he saw an old, white-haired woman exiting the entrance, supported by people. It seemed as though her lower limbs had lost dexterity; two people braced her up on her left and her right, and there was also a girl in a pu

blic security uniform behind her who often reached out a hand to help. Despite this, she still was tripped by some unknown object and stumbled to fall onto the hood of Guo Changcheng's car.

Guo Changcheng scrambled out of the car. The old woman's relatives and friends, the passerbys, and the police that followed her out all pulled her back up in a flurry.

The old woman suddenly burst into loud sobs as if there was nobody else nearby.

All the people around joined in on the commotion. Guo Changcheng heard someone whisper angrily: "I don't know what the police are doing nowadays. They don't care about this thing or that thing, they can't solve anything. Why is our country feeding the m?"

Another person also whispered back: "Right, look at how pitiful this old woman is. She only had this one son. They depended on each other for survival as an orphan and a widow. If something happened, I think she probably won't live either."

The old woman's sore spot was poked and she started crying even more hysterically.

The young policewoman who was following behind her the whole time looked to be about the same age as Guo Changcheng—a child who had just graduated not too long ago. When she saw that everyone was looking at her, she felt momentarily awkward and didn't know what to do. With a red face, she mumbled: "We have regulations here, we have to wait 48 hours before we can..."

Her voice quickly became overshadowed by more voices.

“What 48 hours? Rules are dead but people are alive! Right now, the person is alive but what if he isn’t in a few days? If something really happened, by that time even the daylily dish would have turned cold (t/n idiom meaning it would be too late)! The skeleton is already frozen and you guys still don’t care? Ai, miss, tell me yourself what the difference is between you guys and murderers who kill for gain?”

The young policewoman heard this and thought that what they said was sensible. However, the police force was limited and rules were rules. No matter how reasonable she thought the people were, she couldn’t not ignore the regulations. Anxiously, the rim of her eyes turned red and tears rolled around in them, almost spilling out.

Another family member who came to report a case was a middle

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aged man. He waved his hand: “Enough, even if she wanted to, she wouldn’t be able to do it. Everybody stop pressuring her. Miss, let me tell you, my younger sister also should have gotten off from work yesterday but she never came home. She is about the same age as you; put yourself in her shoes. Think about it yourself, this young lady is usually very obedient, and then suddenly, for no reason, doesn’t return home at night. We can’t even get in contact with her. Don’t you think of course we as family would be worried? If this happened to you, what would your parents and family think? I know that you also have difficulties. How about you help us go talk to your chief, ok? Help us communicate a bit...”

When Guo Changcheng saw this scene, he immediately felt a headache coming on. On one hand, he gathered the courage for speaking in front of a big crowd, on the other he listened attentively to the people talking beside him. There were all sorts of things these people were saying, and their descriptions were a mess. Some others only knew how to indiscriminately blather on about “my xx didn’t come home yesterday”—for those not in the know they would have thought that these people were purposefully gathered here to make trouble.

At this time, the old woman who was sprawled on top of Guo Changcheng’s hood and crying suddenly rolled her eyes back and fainted on the spot. In the space of a moment, Guo Changcheng found his courage and pushed away the people in front of him: “Let me through, sorry, everyone let me through.”

He pulled out his work permit and his keys from his pocket. Under tension, he directly threw it towards the friend who was supporting the old woman: “Drive my car. First, send her to the hospital!”

The friend held the small book: “Ah?”

Guo Changcheng looked over: “Aiyou, sorry I grabbed the wrong one. It’s this one.”

He hurriedly replaced the keys and work permit and handed it to the policewoman on the side: “Comrade, can you bring me to see your chief? I have some urgent matters.”

The policewoman gave him a confused look, and then her eyes widened: “You...are you the chief from Dragon City?”

“No, no, I’m not the chief—

we sent someone to investigate a homicide two days ago. The relevant procedures have already been completed and reported to you. But yesterday that colleague disappeared. Right now, our chief is already on the scene of the crime. He sent me over to give you guys a heads-up first.” After Guo Changcheng said this, he raised his hand to wipe away a forehead of sweat in the dead of winter. Better than expected, he said, “Is everyone here to report a crime? Are they all disappearance cases?”

Many people nodded.

Guo Changcheng: “Oh...oh...then how did the people disappear?”

This sentence was like poking the hornet’s nest. All of a sudden, everyone began clamoring at once, almost sounding like 5000 ducks all yelling together. Guo Changcheng almost developed hypoglycemia because of the noise. He steadied his nerves and felt his pants pocket, lest his social phobia would make the small electric rod in his pocket emit 100,000 volts and hurt the innocent people by mistake.

However, to Guo Changcheng's surprise, he wasn't as afraid as he imagined he would be.

Whenever he asked others for help or asked questions, he always felt that he was a big annoyance who didn't understand anything. Naturally, he feared other people, feared having to make any eye contact or communications. However, when he realized that the people in front of him required his help, Guo Changcheng's words were always surprisingly smooth.

It seemed as though he was born to do this.

Guo Changcheng experienced a flash of inspiration and suddenly waved his hand to interrupt the people's racket. He asked: "I can't hear what you guys are saying. I'll ask a question and everyone raise your hands to respond, ok? For all of your lost friends and relatives, did they all work at the small Quan Shui Wan resort town? If that's the case, raise your hand."

With a whoosh, everyone raised their hand. The policewoman next to Guo Changcheng widened her eyes—earlier, everybody's arguing filled her ears with a buzzing sound and she was only concerned about how long it was before a case could be filed after an adult's disappearance. She didn't realize that it could be a serious incident involving a wide range of people.

Guo Changcheng's thoughts became clearer. He continued to ask: "Then the people who can confirm that their friends and relatives went missing in the resort town keep their hands raised. Those who can't confirm it, lower your hand for the moment, ok?"

A few hands wavered and then lowered. After a moment, they were raised again hesitantly.

The middle-aged man from before said: “Chief, can I say something?”

Guo Changcheng: “I’m not the chief....Ai, forget it, please speak.”

“My little sister is a waitress in the restaurant of the town assembly hall. She didn’t come home yesterday. Since that’s not something that’s ever happened before, everyone in the family is extremely anxious. In the middle of the night, my dad, my eldest younger brother, and my sister’s partner went out together and looked for her along the road to her work. But later those three also disappeared and I couldn’t get in contact with them over the phone.

That’s why I got up bright and early this morning to report the case.” The man’s eyes were still bloodshot. He forcefully kept his voice steady, wanting to be as calm as possible. “Chief, think about it. If it’s

just a small girl it’s one thing, but what could possibly happen to three big old men together? I think something big must have happened.”

His judgement was very accurate, practically dead-on. Although Guo Changcheng was still in a fog, he knew that nothing of what he said was wrong.

When others heard this, they were even more anxious. Everyone who had lost a loved one were apprehensive like ants smoking a way on a hot stove. They tried to squeeze in front of Guo Changcheng to say a few extra words about the situation with their family members. All the people wanted to ask for a statement from this young man who looked like he was ‘an unreliable youth without facial hair’.

If they only wanted to make a clamor, it would have been ok. However, there were people who were also shoving others. One woman who was carrying a child fell as a result, the two or three year old child breaking out into loud wailing. Some people were shouting “Don’t push, we’re all anxious here!”, and others were screaming “Watch the child! Don’t step on the child.”

It was incredibly chaotic.

Guo Changcheng saw stars. If only sister Zhu Hong came...if only Chief Zhao came.

He squeezed his cellphone and thought of the task Chu Shuzhi had entrusted him with. He could not go back. Even more, he could not allow these people to go back rashly. However, they lost their loved ones; how could they calm down?

Guo Changcheng’s mind was momentarily blank.

What should he do? They trusted him so much, allowed him to take care of this task. This was also his first time undertaking a duty alone for more than half a year since induction. How could he dare to betray their trust and screw things up?

If it was Chief Zhao, what would he do? If it was Chu Ge?



They couldn't be allowed to go over there; it was too dangerous

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Guo Changcheng suddenly hurriedly stepped forward two steps and stood on the curb: "Everyone! Everyone!"

The crowd quieted down.

Guo Changcheng held up his work license: "I'm here from Dragon City's Special Investigations Department. We specifically handle major cases. Earlier, our chief had already brought all the elite staff members to the scene of the crime and sent me over to explain the situation clearly to everyone—

Although we haven't found news of your loved ones, we also haven't received worse news. Our people are already expending all our efforts on the search. The greatest help you can give us now is to help the comrades in the local police station to coordinate well, report relevant information, and definitely not get close to the scene of the crime. If you guys got close, it would bring trouble to the search and rescue team, and would not be conducive to us finding people."

He had never spoken so many words in one breath before. In that moment, Guo Changcheng had a feeling that he was not fighting alone.

His heart was burning, like a fire had been lit. He brought his hands together and, with a palm-fist salute, bowed to everyone in a circle: "I thank everyone, and promise everyone that we will absolutely do everything in our power. Right now, can I ask everyone to line up and go inside with me to register?"

The crowd stood there and looked at each other in consternation for a while. Then, they actually lined up in silence. After two or three minutes, they once again went inside the door in an orderly fashion under the guidance of the young policewoman.

On the contrary, it was Guo Changcheng who stood there in a brief daze. For a moment, he didn't dare believe what he had just accomplished.

The tasks of the others were not as easy as Guo Changcheng's. Shen Wei, who had been entangled by the black shadow, had once again developed an illness of stubbornness and refused to let go of Zhao Yunlan no matter what. He used his teeth to hold the back of the Soul-

severing Blade, the icy cold reflection of the blade causing the corners of his already bloodless lips to be even whiter. Turning his head, he aimed the blade at the black shadow trapping him.

Zhao Yunlan snatched the blade from his mouth: "Give it to me."  
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He held this one-of-a-kind blade and fiercely slashed at the black gas wrapped around Shen Wei's arms. Nonetheless, the black gas underneath the blade was like a sticky swamp and the fierce blade could only force it apart slightly. It was sticky and could not be cut at all.

Shen Wei held Zhao Yunlan tighter, glanced over, and swiftly said: "I understand now. That thing is The Profane Land itself. The

only thing that the Soul-severing Blade cannot cut is that thing. You can't do it like this. Cut my arm, quickly!"

Being a mortal, Zhao Yunlan could not understand this great God who could cut off his arms, legs, and head with ease, and so ignored him. He thrust the Soul-severing Blade back into the scabbard, then retrieved a Guardian Order. With a snap of his fingers, a small flame spurted out. The Guardian Order, carrying the flame along, directly dove into the black shadow...

Not even a single residue was left behind.

Shen Wei had always spoken to him in a soft tone in the past. This time, he unconventionally raised his voice: "While there's still time, cut off my arm before it's too late!"

Zhao Yunlan turned a deaf ear to him. He immediately took out the real Guardian Order from his pocket, the real deal carved from the Dashen Mu that he purposefully brought. Shen Wei was shocked: "Isn't that..."

But Zhao Yunlan also let him understand for once what it meant for the "hands to be faster than the mouth". Before Shen Wei had finished speaking, the Guardian Order from the Dashen Mu had already instantly started burning. The flames rose to one chi (1/32 cm) high, the color abnormally red. The black fog entangled around Shen Wei's arms finally withdrew a little in fear.

Shen Wei took back his arm. The first thing he did was to recklessly reach out and take back the half-

burned Guardian Order. With Zhao Yunlan in his arms, he dodged away from the swamp-like black fog. Then, from who knows when, he condensed a pool of clear water in his palm, dousing the fire on the Guardian Order.

The word “Guardian” was already half burned, leaving only “real ghost” behind. (t/n from 镇魂 to 真鬼)

On the back, the line “suppress the souls of the living, calm the hearts of the dead” had long since gone.

The two of them quickly left the scene. Within the leaping up and down evacuation route, Shen Wei could actually even maintain his tightly furrowed brows, carefully wiping away the ashes on the Guardian Order. He directed a solemn expression toward Zhao Yunlan: “Do you know that you were originally not allowed to enter the wheel of reincarnation? That the identity of the Chief of the Guardian Order is equivalent to your protective talisman? This was carved from the Dashen Mu. At critical times, it wouldn’t even have a problem protecting your life. You...”

It turns out that even if his upright gentlemen façade was mostly pretend, this bit of trait was real: whenever Shen Wei scolded someone he really was bad with his words. Ultimately, he had to settle with choosing the closest equivalent, and blurted: “You, you really are a good-for-nothing!”

Behind them, the black shadow followed relentlessly, thick as undissolvable ink. This time it wasn’t summoned by the Shadow Blitz (t/n refer to ch 54/55), but the real deal. The black shadow left nothing behind in the places it touched, absolutely nothing...lik

e it could even swallow up the void; this was the real chaos. The two people who had always had a smooth life never imagined that they would ever have a day as difficult as today, running at the speed of life and death.

Within this life or death scenario, in the rush of running for his life, Zhao Yunlan was able to even take the time to roll his eyes widely at Shen Wei: “Go away. At every opportunity you just cut your arms and dig out your heart. Do you think you’re a gecko? Looks to me like you’re the good-for-nothing.”

Shen Wei suddenly realized with a start that he was influenced by his environment. Even at a time like this he could still be in the mood to bicker with Zhao Yunlan, virtually stupid as if he wasn’t really himself. He immediately closed his mouth. With both hands, he held him, the huge black cloak of the Ghost Slayer spreading out like a black cloud rising in the sky. His feet left the ground at the same time and, with Zhao Yunlan in his arms, he stayed near the ground and flew some tens of meters in a flash. The tips of his feet gently touched the ground and then he plummeted downwards, directly into the rift in the earth, dodging a variety of bursting rocks created by the fissure. His figure was swift like a pitch-black swallow.

At this time, the surface of the ground began to shake slightly yet again.

In a flash, a large group of ghost messengers who were always late at the critical moment burst out from deeper underground. Tragically, before the ghosts could grasp the situation, the indestructible black shadow already swallowed half of them right as they surfaced.

The magistrate (the Panguan aka mythological underworld judge) shrieked and turned himself into a big ball, wanting to go back into the ground without a word. However, like pulling out a disheveled man, he was yanked back out: "Your Honor, it's useless. The underground is not a place to hide."

Then, a group of strange looking messengers from the underworld also joined this team in running away wildly, as if the sole purpose of them appearing was for playing an insignificant role in this messy business.

At this time, Shen Wei and Zhao Yunlan finally put a decent amount of distance between them and the black shadow. Abruptly, Shen Wei leaped out of the fissure and, using strength, pushed Zhao Yunlan forward. Zhao Yunlan instantaneously understood, and, following his strength, leaped forward around ten meters, nimbly supported himself up against the ground with both hands, and stood firmly.

Shen Wei was already in midair, his both hands forming a gesture, his mouth silently reciting an incantation from a distant time and space. The black shadow was currently approaching him bit by bit.

Just as the black shadow was about to touch the corner of the cloak that had drifted to his front, a burst of piercing white light emerged from the hand gesture that Shen Wei had made.

The timing was practically to a hair's breadth.

The black shadow stopped stiffly right in front of Shen Wei. Then, with an abrupt shake, it gradually started being absorbed by the white light.

Everyone held their breath.

After about four or five minutes, the overwhelming black shadow was finally absorbed into the progressively more blazing white light. The cold sweat on Shen Wei's face only now dripped down along the curve of his cheek. The magistrate sat down roughly. Zhao Yunlan let out a breath and slowly relaxed his tight fist that had left imprints on his palm.

The glaring white light began to contract in Shen Wei's hands, and everything seemed to have settled.

Suddenly at this moment, an abrupt change occurred.

Like it was ripping apart the air, a silhouette appeared behind Shen Wei without warning. Then, Gui Mian, who had been lying in ambush for who knows how long, stabbed the three chi long icicle in his hand directly into Shen Wei's heart from behind.

(t/n again chi is about 32 cm)