

### Side Story Extra: The Hounds' Case Files - Part III

In a mountainous region far from the city, Banri had returned to the cabin where he had lived with Sekishu.

As he treated the wounds he'd sustained in battle, Banri reflected on everything that had happened. Losing his family, losing his hometown, and being left all alone in the world. Being forced to separate from Sophie, his older sister's son, whom he'd named. Then there was the hunter named *Banri*, who had saved him at the cost of his own life. Sekishu became his legal guardian after that, and he decided to become a hunter too. He inherited the codename "Banri" from the man who had saved his life, and endured harsh training to be able to fight vampires on equal grounds. He and Sekishu lived in this cabin like father and son. After officially becoming a hunter, Banri completed many missions alongside Sekishu.

For six years, he had been with Sekishu. And yet, he never realized that Sekishu was a believer of the Primordial Faith. When exactly did Sekishu become a Primordial Faith believer? Was it before they met? Maybe after? He'd never said it aloud, but in his heart, Banri had thought of Sekishu as a father. That affection, that respect, it may have clouded his judgment. Banri felt ashamed of his own naivety and foolishness.

After treating the rest of his wounds, eating a proper meal, and preparing for his journey, he steeled himself to clean up his own mess. All that was left was his full set of hunter gear. As a hound, his target was not a ruthless vampire, but Sekishu, who had fallen into the Primordial Faith.

A hound that must now hunt another hound.

*"Cavern District is in vampire territory, isn't it? We'll have Eden guide us—to the Forest of Cocoon Trees, where Paradise is said to be."*

When Banri stood outside the Eternal Vanguard's ritual room to save Theo, he heard that voice coming from inside. Sekishu was most likely heading to Cavern District, so he must go there too.

Banri stepped outside and poured oil along the outer wall of the cabin. Then, he lit it with a torch. In an instant, fire spread across the entire cabin. The place where he had lived with Sekishu for six years was now set ablaze in an inferno. With this, Banri had now lost his second home. The flames that sought to burn his past to ashes illuminated Banri's face, which was completely expressionless as if he'd lost his heart. Once he confirmed that the entire cabin was engulfed in flames, Banri turned his back on it and began walking away. Bidding farewell to the six years he had spent and the memories he had with Sekishu, Banri set off toward Cavern District.