Extinction Game
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It is another hot day in the bush lands of Africa. The pride has retired for a short mid-day nap. The lion cubs frolic under a nearby tree as the adult members of the pride keep a watchful eye. There is an unusually large amount of members that have grown up within the pride. There is a population of about 30, including adults and recently born cubs. The bush lands have received a lot of rain for the last three years, which caused good growing seasons and contributed to great hunting for the pride, with an abundance of available prey.

The dominant male of the pride was once swift and healthy, traits that were passed on to his offspring. But within the past year he fell prey to disease and it doesn’t seem that he will live to see the next winter. Contrary to the previous three years, this summer was extremely difficult for hunting because of a drought that has lasted over the past five weeks. The singed grass and the migrating herds of game, which have moved on to search for better grazing and more water, could be noted as effects of the drought. With the lack of food, the pride has no other choice but to also migrate in order to survive. The pride stops one last time at an almost dry watering hole as they venture onward through the bush.

It has been three days since the pride left familiar territory. They have been successful in their hunting by bringing down three antelope, but the impact of the heat and drought has claimed the life of three members. The dominant male has died and the stronger, younger male resumes the position of leader. Their travel brings them to a small river that runs past a small city. The pride is thirsty and tired and stops to drink and rest for the night. Unknowingly, the pride is subjected to a chemical poison being spilled into the river by an industrial plant, located on the river 25 miles away. By morning there are several casualties, including three males and three cubs. The pride retreats back into the bush lands and continues the search for food.

Later that day, while on a hunt, the pride comes across a competing pride. They have taken down an ox, but now they must compete with the challenging pride over the kill. The pride is out numbered and surrenders the prey after a brief fight. Weak and injured they move on, tired but alive to fight another day. It is early morning, but the sky is dark as rain clouds dance turbulently across the sky. The earth seems to sigh with relief as the water pours down and pounds against the surface of the land. The pride is relieved too, for they have survived another drought.

It has been one year since the drought. The pride has reduced in size from disease. They now number about half the size of the previous year. The dominant male has not successfully reproduced this year. They have possibly developed a problem from drinking the poisoned water in the river from the previous year. The small city that lies about 50 miles to the north is growing larger but has not hindered the pride from hunting. There is also an increase of farms in the area contributing the development of the city.

Winter has passed and spring is in the air. The bush land is slowly being cleared for farm and grazing land, which is slowly shrinking the pride's
habitat. As the city grows larger, more industrial plants and factories spring up. Air pollution is being piped into the atmosphere. The sensitive balance of the ecosystem is being destroyed and various plants and animals begin to disappear. Nitrogen run offs leech into the river from the fertilizers being placed in the fields. The water is no longer safe to drink. Once again, it is time for the pride to move on.

The future of the pride looks bleak. Humans have polluted the water source and air. Disease has crippled and killed half of the pride. They have not been able to reproduce over the last two years. The other prides in the surrounding area outnumber them in size and it is difficult to compete for prey. Unlike the smaller prides, they have no problem reproducing. Their only hope of survival is to relocate again, find a pure water source and good hunting grounds, and eventually begin to reproduce again. If the dominant male is strong enough, they can join another pride and reproduce with the help of a rejuvenated gene pool.