

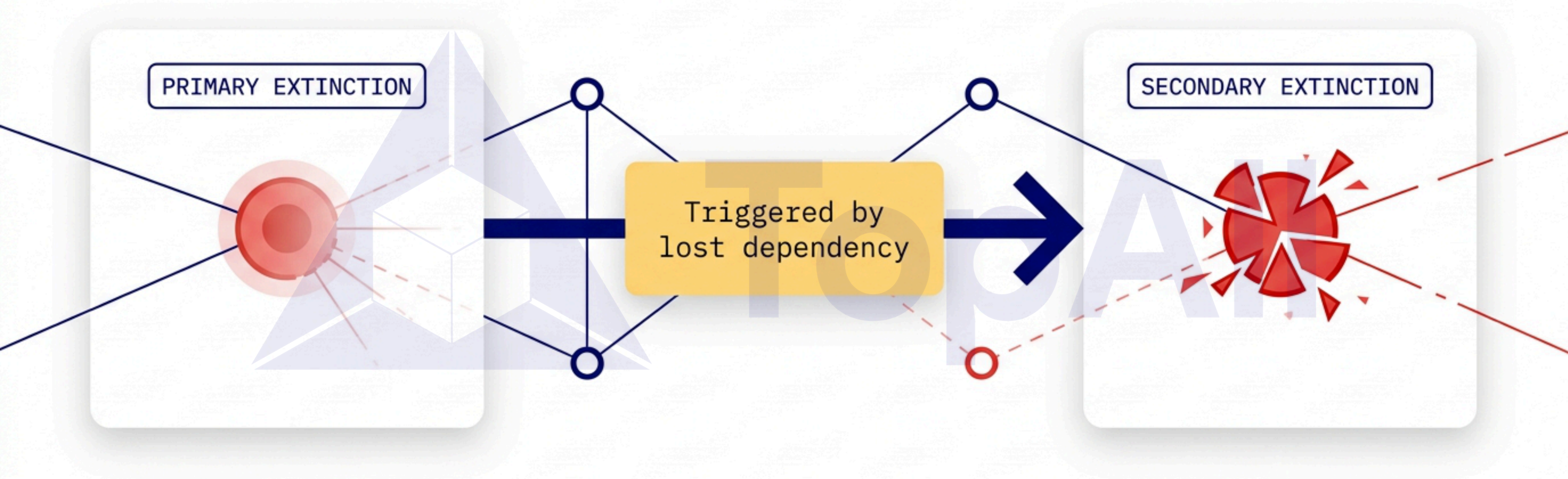
THE EVIL QUARTET: FACTOR IV

When One Extinction Causes Another

The Domino Effect of Biological Dependencies.



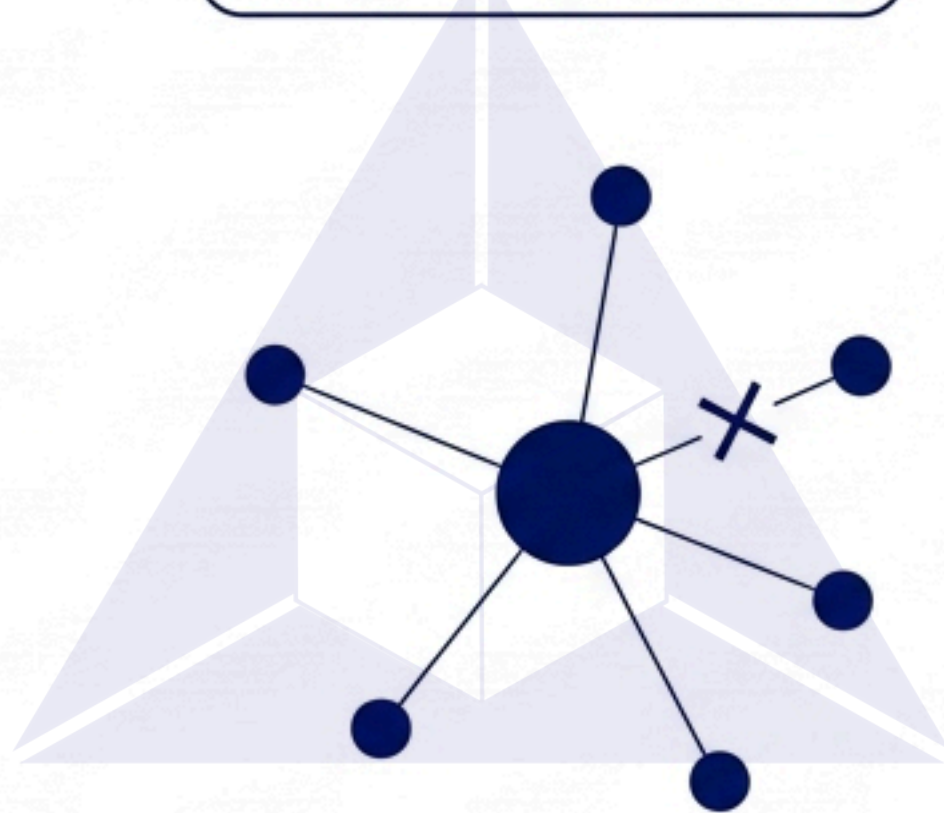
Defining Co-Extinction



The loss of a plant or animal species triggered by the extinction of another species it relies upon.

The Crux: Obligatory Associations

FACULTATIVE (OPTIONAL)



The species relies on multiple partners. If one link breaks, the species survives through its other connections.

OBLIGATORY (DEPENDENT)



Evolution has hardwired these species together. Breaking this single connection is universally fatal.



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$$E=mc^2$$



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Parasitism: The Host Fish Fate

PARASITISM

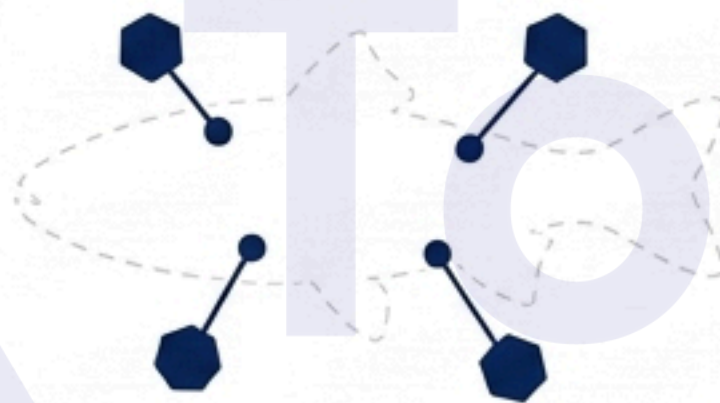
HOST THRIVES



Host fish thrives, supporting a unique assemblage of parasites.

PRIMARY EXTINCTION

EXTINCTION EVENT



The host fish species begins to decline and faces extinction.

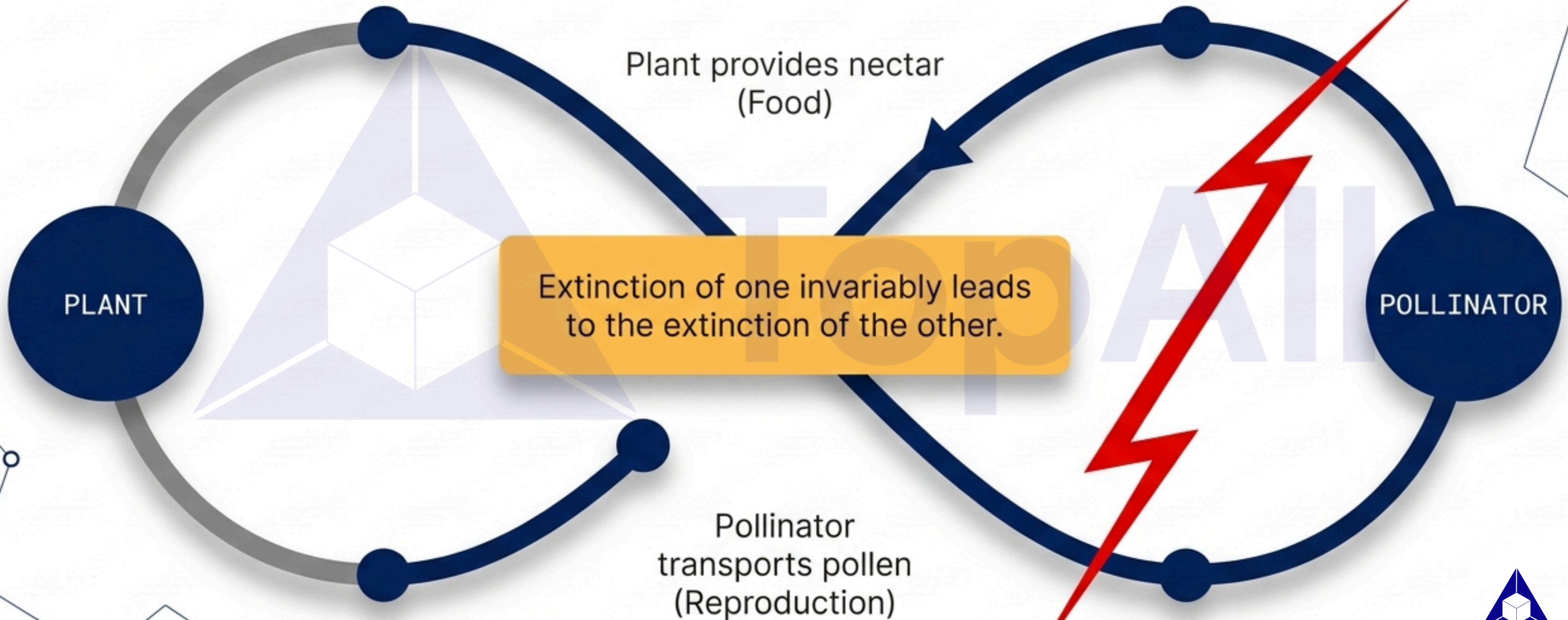
SECONDARY EXTINCTION



The unique assemblage of parasites loses its only habitat and food source, immediately following the host into extinction.

Mutualism: The Co-Evolved The Co-Evolved Collapse

MUTUALISM



We Must Protect the Network

Conservation cannot focus solely on individual species; we must protect entire ecosystems and their invisible web of obligatory relationships.

Removing just one 'rivet' from the system can trigger a hidden cascade of losses that we cannot reverse.



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