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### The Darkest Hour

In the modern era, human ingenuity has allowed society to harness the power of electricity where it has become vital to our daily function. From more intricate systems like large nuclear plants or to more straightforward arrangements like small batteries, almost every aspect of life is ruled by some form of electricity. By converting various resources into energy, astounding methods of travel become feasible, life-saving medical treatments are possible, and the construction of towering architectures is achievable. Applications of the power grid are endless and have greatly contributed to civilization's progression. For something that has provided humanity with so many positive benefits, one might wonder if there were some caveat. This drawback is often overlooked and, in some cases, irreparable. Whether it is directly or indirectly, all use of electricity harms nature as a tradeoff. Although our use of electricity is detrimental to our environment, society does have the capability to control how it uses power which can facilitate an ecosystem's unbelievable ability to heal. Galvanizing millions across the globe to participate in artificial blackouts, the World Wide Fund for Nature's 2010 Earth Hour graphic features the iconic lightbulb. Depicting an unpowered lightbulb hanging in total darkness, the 2010 Earth Hour graphic effectively reminds us of our responsibility over the environment's future through its symbolic portrayal of a budding seedling managing to sustain its vitality through gleaming, undisturbed waters - an ideal environment only attainable through our decision to keep the lightbulb's submersed filament unlit.

The use of a familiar, unpowered lightbulb in total darkness is effective for several reasons. Earth Hour is an event that encourages the world to turn off its lights for an hour. Although sources of light are not limited to the lightbulb, it is the most salient object when it comes to lighting in many minds. Thus, the 2010 Earth Hour graphic allows the viewer to easily internalize the core activity of the event. The lightbulb is also one of the most iconic objects of human civilization as it has progressed through time and often reminds the population of electricity. Electricity is considered one of the modern marvels of today's age, however it comes with a price. Not only does electricity plunder from the environment directly, but the way society utilizes energy also damages nature indirectly. Some usual examples include factories, vehicles, or construction, but even simple cases like air conditioning play a role. These examples all include society's voluntary decision or lack of responsibility. Although simply flipping a light switch is the objective of Earth Hour on the surface, the realization that we have choice over use of electricity is a key part of the message that is shared by the Earth Hour 2010 graphic, and for many, unpowered lightbulbs in total darkness will be their first step in voluntarily aiding the environment.

Though the unpowered lightbulb is a major part of the 2010 Earth Hour graphic, its relevance is connected to the most important element of the image. Society often relates water to the environment as water is part of Earth's beginnings and one of the dominant elements in every ecosystem. The 2010 Earth Hour graphic gives a frame of reference to its observer by featuring a lightbulb whose transparent glass walls are filled with clear, gleaming waters. Submersed in these waters is the lightbulb's filament. Just as the lightbulb is an icon of electricity, the filament of a lightbulb is often where everyone associates the flow of electricity to occur. The water that is illuminating the darkness, much like light would, is resting at the bottom peacefully, despite

being contained in what should be a volatile environment. These undisturbed waters are only possible because there is no electricity flowing through the filament. This unlit filament reiterates a central theme in the graphic's message. Our control of electricity can help the environment regain its footing. It is our responsibility to produce this ideal situation through our actions. Without the conscious decision to keep the filament unlit, the recovering ecosystem would be destroyed.

The final detail that reemphasizes the entire message of the 2010 Earth Hour graphic is portrayed brilliantly through its depiction of a seedling that managed to root itself into the glass walls of the lightbulb. This seedling was able to anchor and sustain itself because of the conscious effort to keep the lightbulb's filament unlit. Without this ideal condition created through deliberation, it would be impossible for this new beginning. The budding life that is growing alongside what could be considered its worst enemy is representative to the achievable possibility with our voluntary effort to restore an ecosystem. As an emerald amongst the darkness, its growth is also a reminder that nature has an astonishing ability to recover and that it is not too late to help the environment. Nature is a powerful force. Frail roots desperately trying to establish a firm foundation into the surface will become stalwart branching networks someday. The 2010 Earth Hour graphic truly reminds us that even in nature's darkest hour, the planet's vanishing flora continue to endeavor for a future where they may thrive once again.

As civilization progresses, humanity continues to destroy irreplaceable resources that the world has taken millennia to cultivate. Although the 2010 Earth Hour graphic focuses on the simple act of flipping a light switch, the goal of the message is to bring the viewer to the realization that nature's fate is in humanity's hands. Our destruction of the environment is not an inevitability, but rather, it is a result of our lack of responsibility. If we are to help nature regain

its footing, we must take this responsibility seriously and realize that our authority over our use of resources is the sole factor contributing to the demise of our invaluable ecosystems. In the same way we choose to turn off our lights, the choice to help or hurt nature rests with us.