

Puzzle 21: All Along The Watchtowers

"There must be some kind of way out of here," said the joker to the thief, "there's too much confusion, I can't get no relief..."

"I know what you mean," replied the thief, "but I'm afraid we're stuck here for the next sixteen days or so."

You see, the joker and the thief had recently been put in charge of testing the king's new "Watchtower Alert System." No longer were simple signal fires atop the towers good enough. No, His Majesty has demanded that the latest technology be used to transmit vital information. To that end these two unfortunate subjects have been running power lines from the four newly constructed generators, along circuitous trails to the six watchtowers. This alone would have taken weeks to accomplish, but to make the project even more confusing, the king did his best to pacify his three favorite lords, Anderson, Nottingham, and Orley, by directing the power lines through gatehouses manned (and powered) by knights of various allegiances. The knights, depending upon which lord they serve, and what signals come in from what lines, are supposed to relay signals further down the lines.

Alas, neither the joker nor the thief are quite sure how any of this really works (they have a hard enough time distinguishing the knights from one another). But His Royal Highness has assured him that this is all according to plan (or more likely the plan of his wizardly adviser who seems to have a fetish for lightning and all things electrical).

"So what now?" asks the thief.

"Well, starting today -- Day Zero, as the king has been calling it -- we're supposed to power-up certain generators and leave other idle. And tomorrow, Day One, we turn on some other combination of generators, and so on. Until we finish with Day Fifteen."

"So, which generators do we activate on which days?"

"Good question. I seem to have lost that memorandum. But if we don't figure it out soon, the king will have our heads."

"This is ridiculous. All of this just so the king can transmit some important message. Surely this is all just some joke?"

