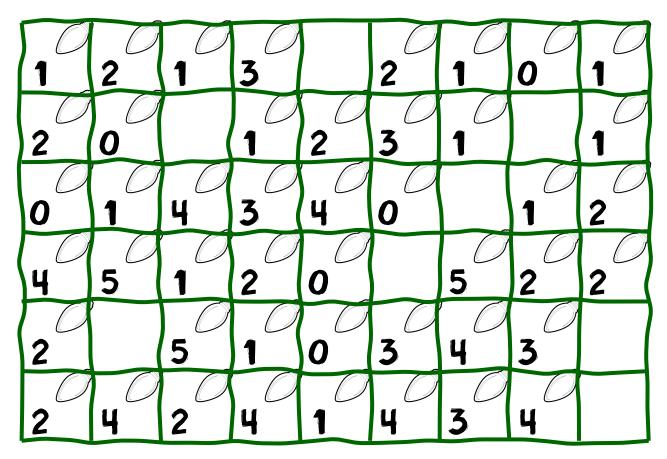


Christmas Lights

"You have to believe me, Hopper! Will sent me a message using these Christmas lights! I painted numbers on the wall to help him communicate, and he did!"
"I'm sorry, Joyce, but you have to admit it's far-fetched. Which bulbs did he light up?"

- It began with nine lit bulbs, nine different colors in nine different columns. I don't recall what those colors were exactly, but I don't think they mattered to Will's message.
- Then, all the bulbs positioned exactly one space away horizontally or vertically from a lit bulb began to shine in a matching color!
- Finally, three of the colors (sorry, I forget which ones) had expanded to light the bulbs that were located two spaces horizontally and vertically away from the original bulb, unless there was an empty space in between.
- All the bulbs had been lit by exactly one of the nine colors! But before I could figure out their meaning, they went out again...



"That's... well, starting with that upper right bulb, I suppose there's only one way it could work out. And when you consider the bulbs illuminated in each color... yes, I guess your story might just add up. But would you do me a favor, Joyce?"

"Yes?"

"Next time, could you just write out the damn alphabet instead?"