The Ball Game

Article by Fred Horn

In Part 5 of the Amazing Games & Puzzles series from the Dutch paper “Kinder Courant,” I present what in fact is not a game but a puzzle. You can copy the board on the following page to ‘play’ Het Dansspel, The Ball Game!

In the Kinder Courant Issue 13, 1863-1864, week 1 appeared Plaat (Plate) 1—Het Dansspel (THE BALL GAME). On page 4 the game instructions could be found:

What is it all about? The instructions tell you exactly what to do.

The Ball Game

A great ball was organized. Thirty ladies were asked (to attend) along with thirty gentlemen, but fifteen of the gentlemen refused to take part. That left fifteen gentlemen to dance with the thirty ladies.

That was not to the women's liking. The ladies from the boarding school of Mrs. Dansgraag (Dancemad) were the most against it, and so they got the idea to not let the other fifteen ladies take part.

Leave this to me said the oldest one of the girls, and she invited everybody to form a circle, which they did.

Now, in order to do it honestly, we will always knock out the ninth lady, said the dance-gracious teacher and she started counting to herself.

When she had removed half of the ladies in this way, it appeared that all of the boarding school pupils from Mrs. Dansgraag were left.

How did she do that?

Here is a large circle with thirty places. You also have thirty discs, fifteen black and fifteen white. Imagine that the white discs represent the ladies Dansgraag, the black discs the other ladies, and then place them so that each time the ninth is a black disc.

(If you did not succeed, wait eight days, then we shall give you the way to solve it.)

You can color the plate neatly, and make a small box for the discs. Your games’ cabinet will once more be enriched with an object.

After all this, do what the children in 1863 were instructed to do, only do not cut out the game board (damaging your magazine) but instead make a copy and glue it on a piece of cardboard.

A great option is to take 30 HALMA pawns, 15 in each color, to use as the young ladies.

Happy Puzzling!
The ladies Dansgraag

Eight days later the solution was published: Turn to page 1 for the answer.

The other ladies