

## Clover

a role-playing game

by Ben Lehman

Art by Patricia Benesiu

### this document

This document contains the rules for a game about an adventurous five year old girl and her life and her friends. Her name is Clover.

To play the game, you must devote an some time to play it with your friends. In playing, you imagine this girl and her friends in their lives, asking questions and saying what they say and what they do. There is no way to win. You just play because the experience is fun. So don't play it with anyone mean.

This game is a fantasy, and in playing it we are imagining the idyllic childhood we never had. It doesn't seek to realistically portray the life of a five-year old girl. Please do not mistake the two.

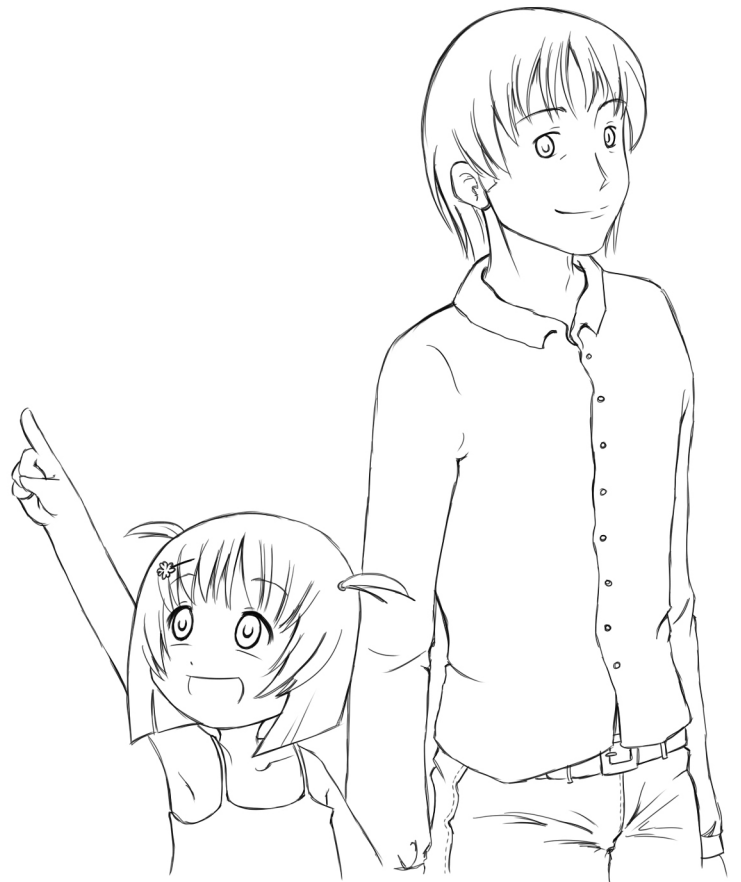
### meet clover

Clover is the best five year old girl in the world. She is energetic and enthusiastic and everything is new and exciting, even the things that are scary. She loves her friends and her dad.

### meet clover's dad

Clover's dad is a young guy, sometime in his twenties, who is very laid back and soft-spoken and friendly. He works some sort of job where he works from home most of the time but sometimes has to leave town for several days on end and Clover has to go stay with friends.

There is no mention of Clover's mom.



### meet clover's friends

Clover has a lot of friends. To start with she knows May, the neighbor girl, her older sisters Sarah and Laurel, their mother Rose, the boy across the street Aaron, and her dad's best buddy Mac. Clover can make new friends.

### what you do when you play

When you play you all sit around and imagine Clover and her friends and adventures. Each player controls a single character at a time. Controlling a character means that you say what that character says and what that character does.

Players will be called on to talk about their character's feelings.

The player who controls Clover's dad will be called on to talk about the world.

### different #s of players

If there are two players, one controls Clover and one controls her Dad. Either they can go out together, or Clover can go out alone and then the Dad player can also control a friend.

If there are three or more players, one player controls Clover, one player controls her dad, and all other players are friends.

### how to start

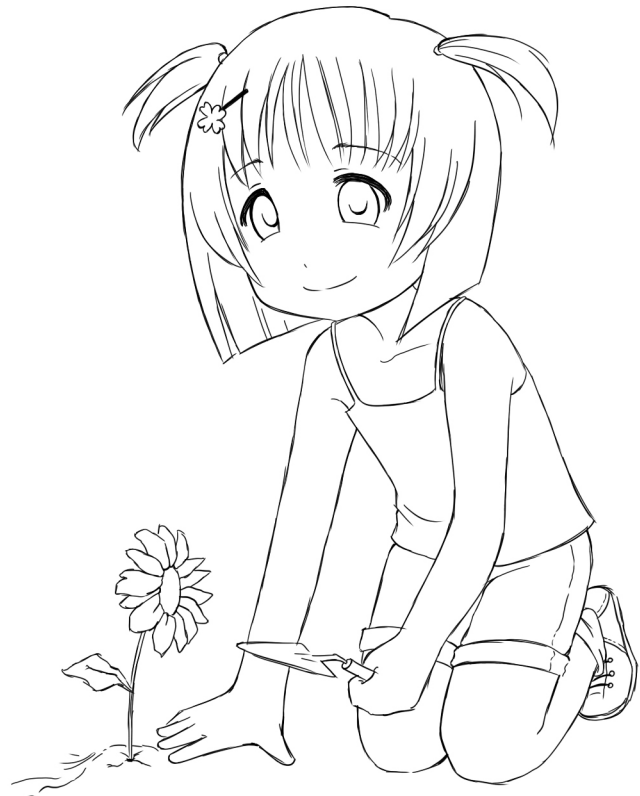
Clover starts at home. Dad's player describes the room she's in, then usually introduces a situation where she has to go outside and explore the world.

### questions

As we play the game, we ask questions about the places and people we are imagining. This is how we learn more about them.

### questions for dad

Clover's player asks Dad's player at least one question about the environment around her, until her player can visualize it. He can answer or say



"You don't know, why don't you find out." Later, if there's a friend, friends can also ask questions.

### questions for clover (or friends)

Dad asks Clover at least one question about her internal state. Dad can ask a question about friends, too, if they're there.

### doing things

After questions, clover (and friends, if any) says what she's doing, until the point where it leads to a new place, or more questions.

### questions and rolling high

"Is it difficult?" if yes, you do poorly. Roll high to do well.

"Is it scary?" if yes, you're scared. Roll high to be brave.

"Would you like to come along?" yes! Roll high to be disinterested.

“Can I come along?” yes. cannot roll.

“Are you getting hungry?” or “are you getting tired?” If you are, you should go home.

### **doing poorly and trying again**

It’s hard being five. Sometimes you’re no good at something and it’s frustrating. If you find someone who’s good at it to teach you to do it right, you’ll do it right next time.

### **going somewhere else**

When Clover goes to a new place, start again with question for dad (about the new place), and one question for Clover. Maybe Clover meets a friend?

### **introducing a friend**

Clover might meet a friend. They’re doing something! They might ask Clover to join or she might just tag along. Or maybe they just say hi and go their separate ways. When you introduce a friend, show the player a picture from this book and read them to write-up about that friend. So if someone is going to play Sarah, show them the write-up for Sarah.

### **friends and questions**

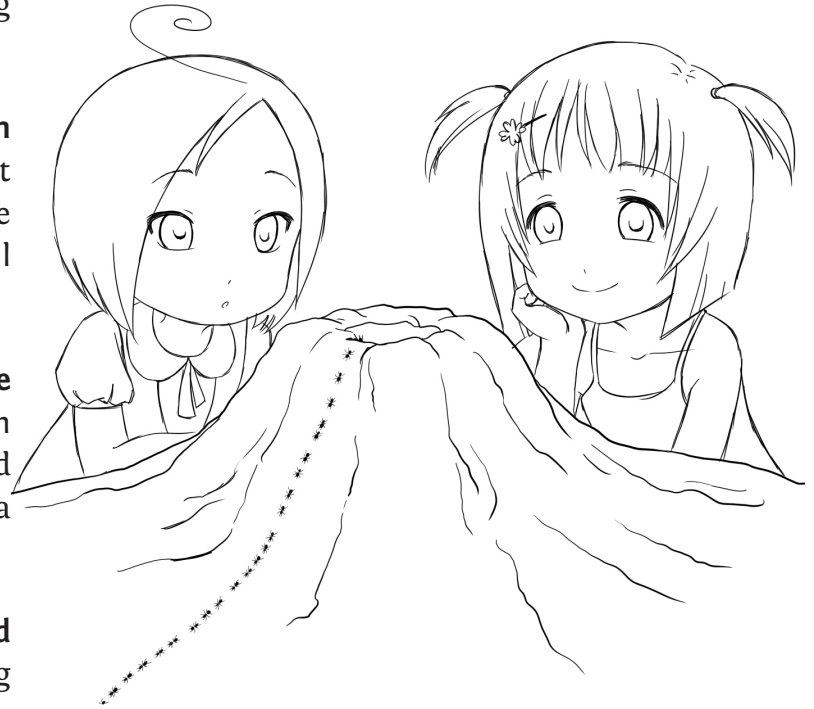
Friends can ask Clover’s dad questions about the environment and be asked questions about their selves by Clover’s dad. Unlike with Clover, they are never required to ask or answer questions.

### **imagining**

Sometimes Clover will want to play pretend. To do this, she just says “I imagine that ...” and then describes what she’s imagining. Because what she’s imagining is internal to her mind, Dad can and should ask questions about it but can’t add details of his own.

### **how to stop**

When Clover gets hungry or tired she has to go back home. This might be an adventure in itself. Once she’s home, she tells her dad about her adventures and then he gives her a snack or a



nap.

Then she asks “Dad, can I go out and play again tomorrow?”

Dad says “We’ll see, honey,” and the game is over.

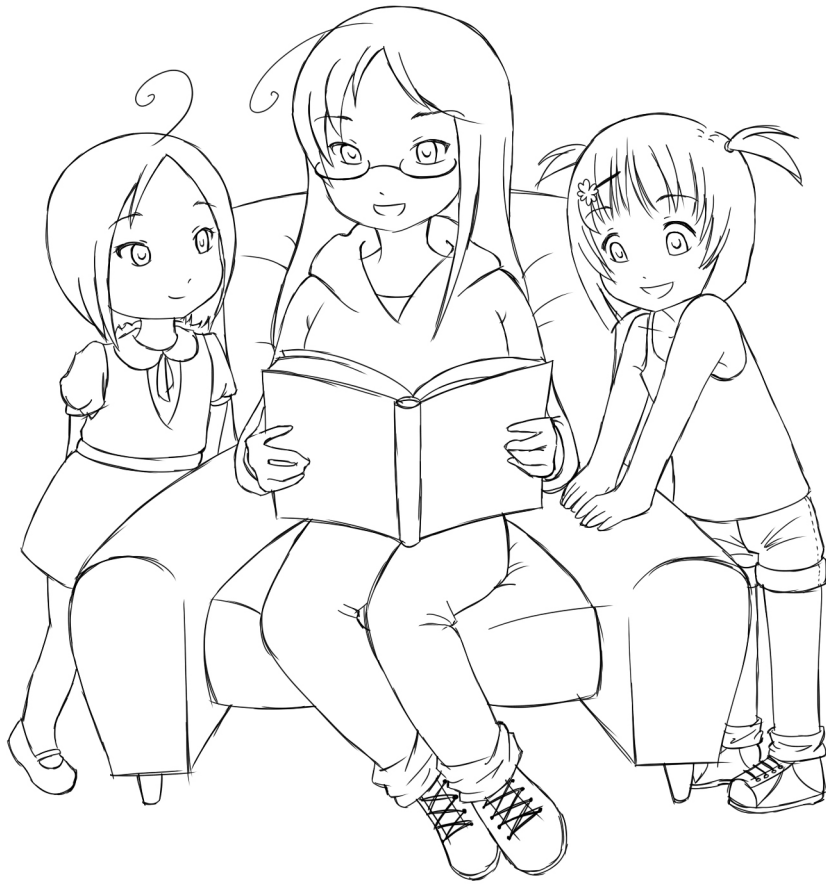
### **clover’s friend may**

Clover’s friend May lives next door with her sisters Sarah and Laurel and her mom Rose and a dad that isn’t around very much. She’s smart and a year older so she goes to kindergarten and knows a lot more. She still ends up playing tag-a-long to Clover a lot.

in the morning May might be: At the bus stop, going to school. In her house, eating breakfast.

at noon May might be: At the duck pond, feeding the ducks. In her house, bored. At the bus stop, getting home from school.

in the afternoon May might be: At the park, playing on the slides. In the backyard, using the old swingset. At her house, playing with dolls.



### clover's friend laurel

Laurel is May's even older sister. She's nineteen and goes to the local community college. She's sort of bratty. She doesn't get along with her parents and has strange boyfriends. She really loves Clover, though, and teaches her to do things like throw water balloons and make slingshots.

In the morning Laurel might be: At home, asleep.  
At the park or downtown, still awake.

At noon Laurel might be: At home, eating breakfast.  
Downtown, shopping.

In the afternoon Laurel might be: At school, actually going to classes for once. Anywhere else, up to no good.

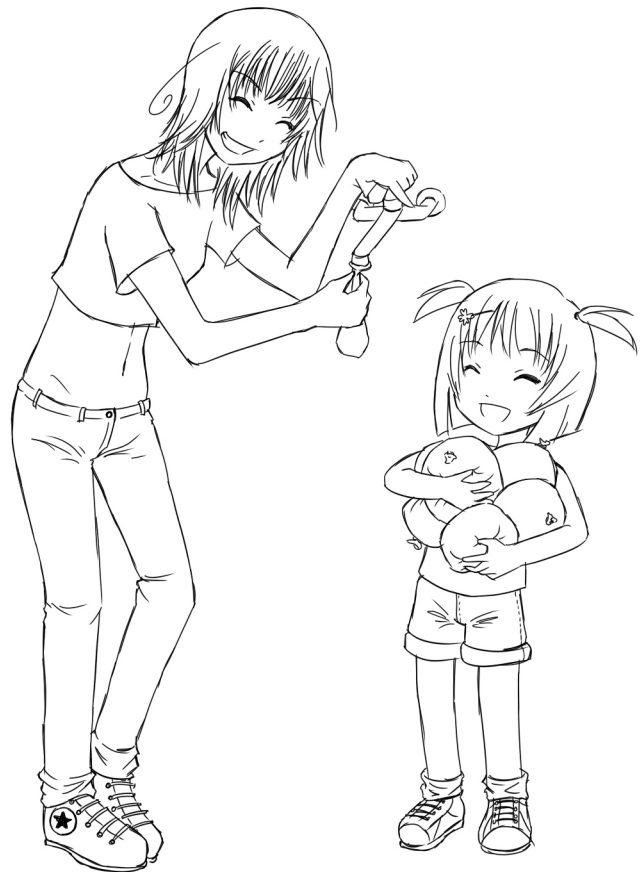
### clover's friend sarah

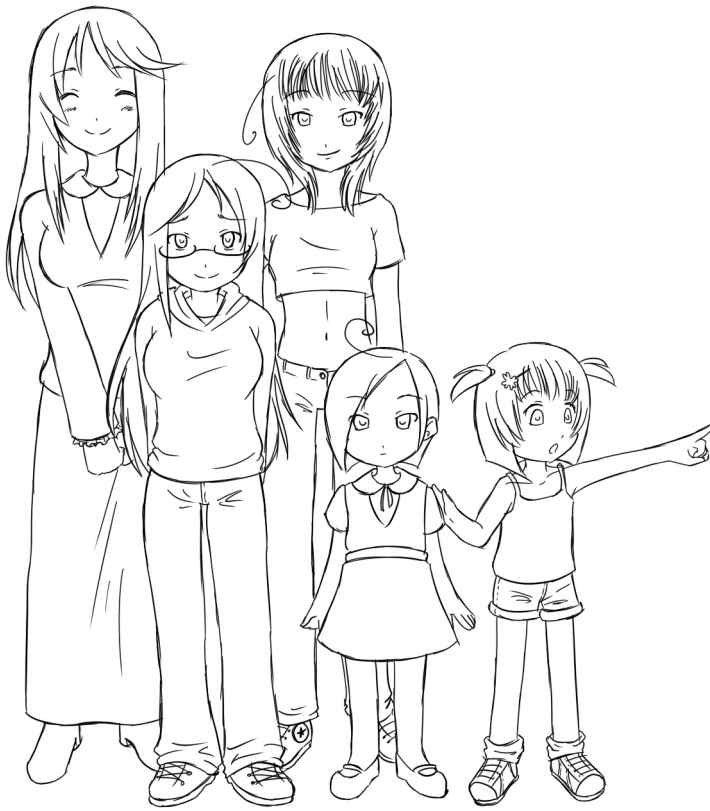
Sarah is May's older sister. She's 14 and just started high school this year. She's friendly to everyone but definitely awkward and a little shy. She likes teaching Clover how to do things. She babysits for Clover sometimes when Dad is out of town.

In the morning Sarah might be: At the bus stop, going to school. At her house, sleeping in or making breakfast.

At noon Sarah might be: At school, eating lunch with her friends. Downtown, shopping.

In the afternoon Sarah might be: At a friend's house, studying or hanging out. At home, playing with May, or studying.





### **clover's friend aaron**

Aaron is the boy on the other side of Clover's house. He's the same age as Clover. He has a big friendly dog named Ruff and many spaceship toys, but gets lonely at home. He likes rules.

In the morning Aaron might be: At home, watching cartoons while eating breakfast. At the park with Ruff.

At noon Aaron might be: At home making himself lunch. Holding a secret meeting in his treehouse. On the street, walking Ruff.

In the afternoon Aaron might be: Downtown with one of his parents. At the duck pond, feeding the ducks. Over at May's because Rose felt sorry for him. At home, bored.

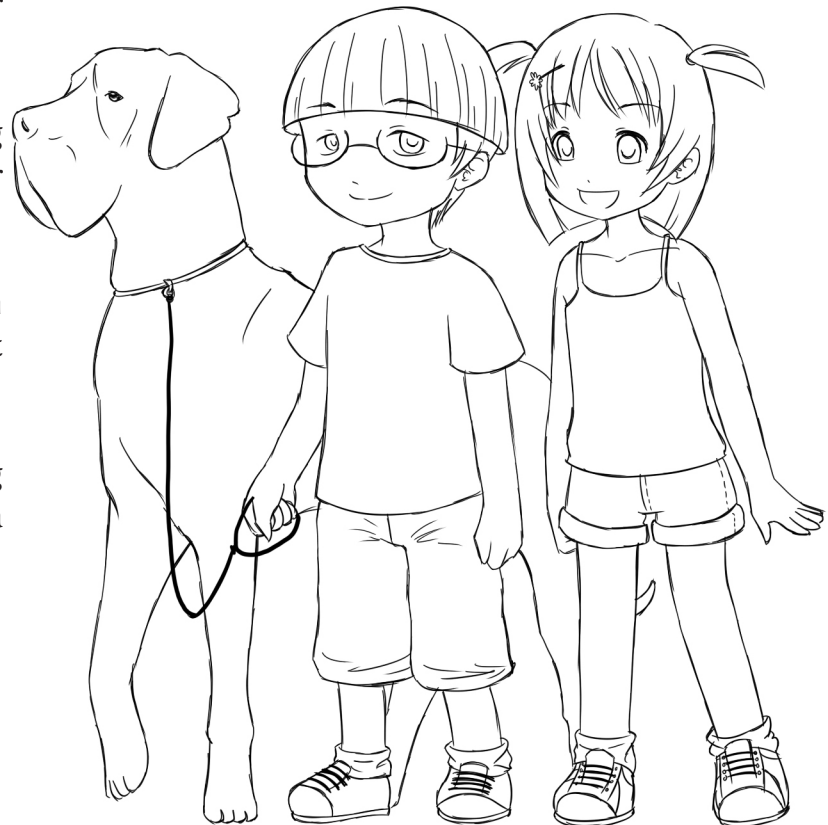
### **clover's friend rose**

Rose is May's mom. She stays at home most of the time taking care of her daughters. She's very sweet and domestic, but has a lot of fun whenever she can get away with being a little bit naughty.

In the morning, Rose might be: At home, making breakfast and bag lunches or watching soaps, or at the bus stop, going grocery shopping.

At noon, Rose might be: At the park with May, at home, relaxing, or downtown, still out shopping.

In the evening Rose might be: At home, making dinner. On the street, taking the girls out to a movie.



### clover's friend mac

Mac is Dad's best buddy since forever. He's really tall and strong. He works at his parent's florist shop downtown which he'll run someday. He has a complicated relationship with Laurel that flies over Clover's head.

In the morning Mac might be: On the street, riding his bike to work. At the park, thinking things over.

At noon Mac might be: Downtown, at his job. On the street, riding his bike home for lunch.

In the afternoon Mac might be: On the street, trying to work up the courage to talk to Laurel. At Clover's house, talking to Dad. Downtown, at work.



### Ideas for Adventures

Just after it rains

Feeding the ducks

Playing in the park

Playing pretend with a cardboard box

Looking in the basement

Taking a hike with Dad and Mac

Sarah is babysitting

Taking the bus to get a birthday cake

Staying over at May's house

Building a tree fort

Copyright 2011

Ben Lehman

Art Copyright 2011

Patricia Benesiua

These  
Are  
Our *Games*  
Cel  Style