

Dagmar Hoßfeld



& Co



Conni

# Conni

and the Exchange Student



**CARLSEN**

Jakob.

Conni gives him an amused look. »You're far too young for that!«

»No I'm not!«

»Yes you are!«

Mum **clutches her forehead**<sup>46</sup>.

»Let's clear the table and have a little rest.« She turns to Conni. »We'll talk about it later, okay? In peace and quiet and, most importantly, when Dad's here.«

»Yes, fine,« sighs Conni. At least Mum hasn't immediately said no. That is something. And anyway, she remembers, she and Jakob still have to sort out the birthday present. Mum gets up and is about to gather up the **crockery**<sup>47</sup>. Jakob **beats her to it**<sup>48</sup>.

»You go and lie on the sofa and have a look at the paper,« he says generously. »Conni and I'll put everything in the dishwasher, then we'll go upstairs and play a board game!«

»Hey, are you two up to something?« asks Mum. »Or have I got the date wrong, and it's already my birthday?«

»Wrong both times,« laughs Conni. »But you can put your feet up all the same.«

»Yes, go on! Do it,« Jakob pesters, pushing Mum towards the door. Conni rolls her eyes. Now Jakob really is **exaggerating**<sup>49</sup> a bit. If he carries on, Mum will get suspicious. She surreptitiously treads on her brother's foot.

»Ow!« he immediately squawks. Conni raises her eyebrows menacingly, but Mum has already grabbed the paper and isn't paying any more attention to the two of them.

Conni loads the dishwasher at top speed. »Done!« she cries, signalling to Jakob to go on ahead of her.

Jakob grins and runs upstairs. Conni follows him soon after, but only once she's made sure that Mum is lying on the living

room sofa.

One short hour later, they are **surveying**<sup>50</sup> their teamwork with satisfaction. Twelve lovely photos mounted on coloured card, one for each month of the year, carefully labelled, and decorated with Jakob's colourful illustrations.

»Do you think she'll like it?« A fleck of sky-blue stands out proudly on Jakob's forehead.

»Of course she will.« Conni nods. »A home-made calendar is a brilliant present and, what's more, it's unique. You can't buy anything like this ready-made!«

The calendar really is perfect, she thinks. Brilliant!

»We just have to wrap it up now.«

She looks around her bedroom. It looks pretty chaotic after their **craft**<sup>51</sup> session, but

the pretty **gift-wrap**<sup>52</sup> that she's bought for this purpose has to be somewhere in the mess.

Jakob pulls out a floral roll from under the desk. »Might this be what you're looking for?« he grins.

Conni grins back. »Absolutely, wise guy. So do you happen to know where the **Sellotape**<sup>53</sup> is?«

As Conni kneels on the floor cutting the wrapping paper to the right size, Jakob rummages through the desk.

»Got it!« he finally announces.

Shortly afterwards, the calendar is nicely wrapped. Conni makes a couple of bows out of gift ribbon and sticks them on.

»Great,« she says. »All that's missing is the flowers. But we'll pick them tomorrow morning so that they're nice and fresh. I'll wake you up quarter of an hour before Mum

gets up, okay? Then we'll have enough time.«

»Okay.« Jakob chuckles to himself. »Wow, this is so cool. Mum won't believe it.«

Conni gets up and ushers her brother out of the room.

»Yes, I think so too,« she says, casting a glance at the clock. »But I've got to go now. I'm meeting Anna and the others.«